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GEORGE WASHINGTON

BY

Worthington Chauncey Ford

IN TWO VOLUMES

VOL. I

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UNIV. OF
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TO

MY BROTHER

PAUL LEICESTER FORD

IN AFFECTIONATE REMEMBRANCE OF

MANY YEARS

OF

FELLOWSHIP AND HIGH COMPANIONSHIP

224098

INTRODUCTORY NOTE

THE position of Washington in the historical annals of the United States was determined before his death. The century that has passed since that event has only confirmed the judgment of his contemporaries, and changed but little the eminence conferred upon him. He stands at this time for what is best and highest in public policy and political morality; and his name is still sought to give support to aims but little in consonance with his expressed opinions. An Englishman and conservative by origin and temperament, he became the central figure in the Revolution, the very embodiment of the radicalism of the day. Successful in winning independence for his country, he again became a conservative, a check upon the rampant dishonesty, the product of war and paper money, that threatened the union of the States. As President he was the great source of federal power, and maintained a balance between the contending factions which would mould the government to serve their own extreme ends. To him was given the credit for bringing the war to a successful issue, and to him was attributed the foundation

of the union of States. One hundred years have not materially modified these opinions.

In one respect Washington has lost in definition. His name and renown are taken for granted, and his individuality has thus lost. He is mentioned, but his opinions are not studied, and the words of his writings have been forgotten. The tribute to his memory intended in these volumes must be found in a close dependence upon his letters and State papers. It is not as a soldier or as a President that I have sought to draw him; nor do I wish to write a history of the times to show Washington's relations to his contemporaries. I have endeavored to make the man write his own biography, using his own phrases and words to illustrate his attitude towards public questions and public characters. I cannot but feel that much more could have been included in this plan, but any modification of the scheme would have led me into too wide a field for the limits set to these volumes.

WORTHINGTON CHAUNCEY FORD.

BOSTON, December 14, 1899.

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GEORGE WASHINGTON

Univ. of California

GEORGE WASHINGTON

CHAPTER I

FAMILY

GENEALOGY has played strange pranks with the Washington family. It was not enough to conceal even the part of England from which it sprung, but it must cast a doubt upon every possible line which could be traced. The man who gave the family its chief claim to renown had only a vague idea of his ancestry, and so obscure were the traditions reported to him, that the Garter King of Arms was unable to give them substance and consistency. For nearly a century since the death of George Washington his English ancestry baffled all research, and the absence of a definite connection gave occasion to conjecture and false assertions that were not only mythological in themselves, but led to the creation of a

mythology, in which Odin was represented as the forerunner of the great American. His isolation in renown, one only in a large family connection of mediocre men, excused the efforts to explain his existence and qualities. With so much that was of the human around him, only a divine origin could account for his pre-eminence. It was an honest but mistaken conception of what was demanded. The man was not touched with genius—the nearest approach to the divine the world is able to offer; but he had a certainty of vision and honest directness of accomplishment which went far to make good the want of genius, and these qualities he had inherited from his immediate ancestors.

The first comers to Virginia expected to find a garden spot out of which immense profits could easily be acquired. Years of hardship and destruction were required to wipe away these early expectations, and then the colony grew slowly but surely into a prosperous and commercially potent community. The banks of the rivers attracted the immigrants from old England; the climate and fruitful soil drew settlers from the more northern dependencies, and especially from New England; and the rise of an important staple for export kept the connections with the mother country close and mutual. Slowly the stream of population crept up the larger rivers, still restricted to narrow fields by the dread of the Indians and the need of ready access to the sea. In the middle of the seventeenth century the northern banks of the Charles and Rappahannock were pronounced safe and thrown open to settlement. The country, hitherto almost a waste, was divided into counties; land rights gave occasion for plantations, and

master or landholder, servant and slave, turned their energies to make it yield a support and something over.

In 1653 a county was cut out of Northumberland, and the name of Westmoreland given to it. The bounds ran from Machotic River to the falls of the river Potomac, above the Necostins town, now known as the city of Washington. An immense territory was included in this new division, for it has since been divided into three counties, those of Westmoreland, Stafford, and Fairfax. Houses, as yet, clung to the river, and the bank was fringed with the homes of men who still retained their love for England, and who made frequent visits to their old towns. These newcomers were not from any one county of the mother land, nor were they of one profession. Merchants naturally constituted a majority, for they were of the venturesome class, feeling the impulse of expansion that has made England the great colonizer of the world. Whether in search of religious liberty, of gain, or of adventure, the emigrant determined to make the most of the opportunities the new continent offered. He went out a settler, to make a home for himself in other fields, yet breaking in no degree with the traditions or the memory of his place of origin.

On the Potomac were many places held by men whose names are well known in the early history of Virginia, and by some others who are known only because they were neighbors of or connected with the Washingtons. Who was this Washington that could give such distinction to his surroundings as to save them from the utter forgetfulness naturally belonging to

them? There have been claims of high ancestry, of prominent position in England, of remarkable merit, and of praiseworthy deeds. Looking backwards, with the knowledge of real greatness in one member of the family, his forbears are tipped with the lustre of his fame, and seem large against the mass of mediocrity that surrounded them. Under the glamor of his name objects as well as persons take on a false or unnatural light. Virginia was supposed to run to the South Sea, and to include the island of California. So the Washington line was thought to extend to the clouds, gaining in force by its very uncertainty. To be renowned in peace as well as in war, to be the founder and hero of a great nation, and to be held in an estimation approaching veneration, these conditions demanded some explanation other than the dull pages of contemporary records could supply. In the use of the imagination the genealogist excelled the historian.

Washington himself was in doubt about his English connections, and could give only a hint to the Garter King of Arms who wished the information. "I have often heard others of the family, older than myself, say, that our ancestor, who first settled in this country, came from some one of the northern counties of England; but whether from Lancashire, Yorkshire, or one still more northerly, I do not precisely remember." A century had so thoroughly obliterated all remembrance or tradition of the English home that no member of the family, large as it was and not widely scattered in Virginia, could name the county whence the migration was made. Sir Isaac Heard, who had started the question, found the names of John and Lawrence Washington in the

Visitation of Northamptonshire of 1618, and conjectured that they might be the two brothers of the same name who emigrated to Virginia. Tracing the family through this link, he connected it with one still more ancient in Lancashire. The chain was not complete, and certain weak links led to Heard's expressing very definite doubts of its being reliable. Others who followed him were not so scrupulous, and the historian of Northamptonshire, one Baker, overanxious perhaps to claim for this county the honor or prestige, accepted Sir Isaac's results, omitting to express any doubt of their finality. He asserted that the emigrant John, son of Lawrence Washington of Sulgrave, was of South Cave, of York County ; and that his brother Lawrence was a student at Oxford in 1622, and afterwards migrated to America. Confusing as such a conclusion was, the air of certainty given to Baker's pedigree carried conviction and made it acceptable.

The real point at issue involved one of age, for both the tables of Heard and Baker made the brothers too old to be the probable emigrants. To explain this point new lines of connection were suggested, but none of them proved to be open to careful tests, and for many years it was destructive criticism only that could be applied to the family line. Not even the experience and enthusiasm of Col. Chester enabled him to do more than to clear the field of false conjectures, a task useful as preparing for the final discovery. It was only recently that the researches of Henry F. Waters have fully explained the doubtful matters, and offered the clues that have proved so fruitful of results. What a commentary on ancestral claims all this doubt and

perplexity prove, when found in the case of a man who had every claim to renown. In the face of such obscurity of origin it is misleading to attribute transcendent merit or position to his ancestors.

The first of the name, John Washington, is said to have lived in Whitfield, of Lancaster county; but nothing is certainly known of him or his sons. His great-grandson, Lawrence, received a grant of a parcel of the priory of St. Andrew,—the manor of Sulgrave,—with all the lands in Sulgrave belonging to the dissolved priories of Canons Ashby and Catesby. Thus he shared in the spoils of the policy of Henry VIII., and it was no small share that fell to his lot. He was buried in Sulgrave church, and the stone slab, with six brass plates let into it, has long been an object of interest. The first plate contained the Washington coat of arms, argent, two bars gules, in chief three mullets of the second. On either side, in brass, were effigies of Washington and his wife, and below were representations of their "iiij sons & vij daughters." So clear were these images that the costumes could be recognized, marking their wearers as civilians of the middle of the sixteenth century. The hands of vandals early removed the plate of Mrs. Washington—Amy Pargiter—and recently the effigies of the children have been stolen. In his will he leaves a cottage to be held for some honest aged or impotent person, the rent of which was to be "one red rose at the feast of St. John the Baptist yearly, if the same be demanded," a bit of sentiment not inherited by his descendants.

His son sold the manor of Sulgrave, thus breaking a known connection of the family, and one sufficient to

give it a distinguishing association with a certain locality, something of an advantage in English life. Robert Washington, though parting with his birthplace, desired to be buried with his father, in the south aisle of the church at Sulgrave. His brother, Lawrence, was something of a wanderer. Entering Gray's Inn in 1571, he was called to the bar in 1582, being styled of "Gray's Inn, co. Middlesex, gent.," a description definite enough to fix his position in life. He soon after purchased a manor in Warwick county, but removed to Herts in 1594, and towards the end of Elizabeth's reign was living in Kent. As Registrar of the Court of Chancery he was assessed for suppressing the Irish rebellion; and under King James, he was chosen to represent Maidstone in Parliament. He retained the post of registrar until his death in 1619. The prominence of being a member of Parliament was not notable, and his appointment in the Chancery Court was not one to be magnified into greatness. Without a fixed and recognizable home, he could hardly be regarded as the founder of a family. It is safer and more close to the facts to admit fair abilities and a full performance of what was expected of him—reputation better than one founded upon war, rapine, or commercial greed. His epitaph, in good lapidary style, tells his whole story.

MORTALIS MORTE
IMMORTALIS.

HERE RESTETH THE BODY OF LAWRENCE
WASHINGTON ESQ; OF THE FAMILY OF THE
WASHINGTONS, ANTIENTLIE OF WASHINGTON
IN THE COUNTIE PALATINE OF DURHAM:
REGISTER OF THE HIGHE COURT OF CHANCERY

XXVII YEARES: HE HAD TWO WYVFS, MARTHA
DAUGHTER OF CLEMENT NEWCE OF HARTFORD-
SHIRE ESQ: AND MARY DAUGHTER OF SIR RAYNOLD
SCOTT OF THIS COUNTIE KNIGHT: BY HIS FIRST
HE HAD 5 SONS AND 2 DAUGHTERS; LAWRENCE
AND MARY, THE ELDEST ONLY LYVING. LAWRENCE
SUCCEEDED HIM IN HIS OFFICE, MARRIED ANN
DAUGHTER OF WILLIAM LEWYN JUDGE OF THE
PREROGATIVE COURT. MARY MARRIED WILLIAM
HORSEPOOLE OF THIS PARISH GENTLE^{M} HIS OTHER
DAUGHTER MARTHA MARRIED TO ARTHUR
BESWICK GENTLE^{M} SON OF WILLIAM BESWICK
OF THIS COUNTY ESQ; HE HAVING LIVED A
VIRTUOUS AND XTIAN LIFE OF SINGULAR INTIECRITY
IN HIS PLACE. BEING OF THE AGE OF LXXIII YEARES
DIED THE XXI OF DECEMBER AN^{O} D^{MI} 1619. A
FAITHFULL BELIEVER IN THE MERRITTS &
MERCIES OF HIS SAVIOUR. TO WHOSE MEMORIE
HIS SONNE HATH ERECTED THIS MONUMENT
THOUGH AFTER MY SKINNE
WORMS DESTROY THIS BODY,
YET SHALL I SEE GOD IN MY FLESH.

Not so much is known of Lawrence, the son of Robert, who joined with his father in selling Sulgrave, and retired to Brington. Beyond his marriage in 1588 with Margaret Butler of Tighes, the list of his seventeen children, and his death in 1616, leaving a widow and a large family, all records are silent concerning him and his deeds. If conjecture is proper in such a case, it may be supposed that he enjoyed some influence leading to the court, or in that direction, for two of his sons were knighted, an act that usually went by favor. Sir John, of Thrapston, lived without renown, and is interesting only by reason of his connection with this family.

His eldest brother, William, advanced his interests by his marriage with Anne, daughter of Sir George Villiers, of Brooksby, and half-sister of George, Duke of Buckingham. Through this connection he received favors from the king, such as the knighthood, and a grant of the keepership of Grafton Park and Potters Pury Park, in Northampton, with the fee of two pence a day from each of them, with the herbage, pannage, and fallen wood, "as the same had been held by the late Duke of Buckingham." Nor did the royal bounty stop with this; for he had a patent covering the "sole benefit of transporting lampernes alive beyond the sea, to be taken in the Thames or elsewhere in England," a patent that must have brought profit, as he was earnest in seeking its renewal in 1635.

This close connection with the king brought suffering upon his house in the troublous days of the Puritans. Sir William and his children were stanch royalists. A daughter, Elizabeth, had married William Legge, one of the grooms of the bedchamber to Charles I., and holding a commission as lieutenant-general of the ordnance under Lord Newport, in the first expedition against the Scots in 1639. Twice was he taken prisoner, but he had proved his courage and fidelity, and was made governor of Chester and Oxford in 1644. Such was the confidence of the king that Legge was one of the three companions chosen to accompany him in his flight from Hampton Court, and Lord Clarendon speaks in the highest praise of his worth. "Legge had had so general a reputation of integrity and fidelity to his master that he never fell under the least imputation or reproach with any man. He was a very punctual

and steady observer of the orders he received, but no contriver of them, and though he had in truth a better judgment and understanding than either of the other two (Ashburnham and Berkeley) his modesty and diffidence of himself never suffered him to contrive bold councils." On the death of the king, Legge was imprisoned, but obtaining leave to go abroad, joined Prince Charles, and being wounded was taken prisoner at Worcester. Escaping from prison with the aid of his wife, he entered into new royalist plots, for which he was well rewarded on the restoration of the monarchy. As the ancestor of the Earls of Dartmouth, he has a double association with America. His wife was, as a Papist, specially permitted in 1678–9 to stay in London, being very weak and sickly, and she survived her husband eighteen years, dying in 1688. Her own brother, Henry Washington, was also involved in the royalist cause, leading the storming party at Bristol, and acting as governor of Worcester during its first siege in 1646.

However much this service on the side of the king redounded to the credit of Sir William and his family, the true repute was due to the line of his brother, Lawrence. He was born about 1602, and appears to have entered Brasenose College as early as 1619, though he did not sign the general matriculation register until November, 1621, probably prevented from so doing by political disturbances. His tastes were decidedly scholastic, and he preferred to live in the shadows and retirement of the college to meeting the buffets of the world in a career. Taking his degree of B.A. in 1623, he became a Fellow in the following year, and served

as lector, one of the principal educational offices in the college, from 1627 to 1632. He also was one of the proctors, filling a vacancy due to an exercise of the royal displeasure, directed against his predecessor.

On the 14th of March, 1632–3, he was presented to the then valuable living of Purleigh in Essex, and at once resigned his fellowship. This gift he received at the hands of Jane Horsmanden, whose nephew, Warham Horsmanden, came to Virginia, and served in the Governor's council. About the time Lawrence Washington went to Purleigh he married Amphillis, but beyond that nothing is known of his wife. Conjecture has been allowed to place her in many families, and circumstances have been produced to show that she was not his social equal. In the absence of actual records, it is better to acknowledge the general ignorance. She endured all the changes of fortune that came to him, which were enough to try her fortitude and fidelity, and survived him. He was a marked man politically because of his family connections, if for no other reason. It was said he was indiscreet in his conversation, at a time when the followers of the king were in disfavor, and their sayings were freely carried to those who had the wish and the power to punish and annoy. In November, 1643, he was ejected from the living at Purleigh, by order of Parliament, as a "malignant royalist." A mere charge without evidence would not have worked this change, and in White's *First Century of Scandalous Malignant Priests* the full weight of his evil-doing was recorded. "The Benefice of Lawrence Washington, Rector of Purleigh in the County of Essex, is sequestered, for that he is a common

frequenter of Ale-houses, not onlly himselfe sitting dayly tippling there, but also incouraging others in that beastly vice, and hath been oft drunk, and hath said, *That the Parliament have more Papists belonging to them in their Armies than the King had about him or in his Army, and that the Parliaments Armie did more hurt than the Cavaliers, and that they did none at all;* and hath published them to be Traitours, that lend to or assist the Parliament."

It is evident that the accuser has made a strange mixture of religion and politics, and yet it is very probable that Washington was outspoken in his opinions of the Parliament, representing as it did all that was opposed to his views and convictions. He paid the full penalty, but there was every reason to believe the charge of drunkenness was unnecessary. After the Restoration, a defense of these persecuted clergymen was undertaken by John Walker, and he found enough good to record of the Purleigh rector. "It is not to be supposed, that such a Malignant could be less than a Drunkard, and accordingly he is charged with frequent Commissions of that Sin, and not only so, but with Encouraging others in that Beastly Vice. Altho' a Gentleman (a Justice of the Peace in this County) who Personally knew him, assures me, that he took him to be a Worthy, Pious Man, that as often as he was in his Company, he always appeared a very Modest, Sober Person, and that he was Recommended as such, by several Gentlemen, who were acquainted with him before he himself was. Adding withal, that he was a Loyal Person, and had one of the best Benefices in these Parts, and this was the only Cause of his

Expulsion, as I verily believe." After his expulsion he was permitted to retain the living of Braxted Parva, one so poor and miserable that it was with difficulty any one was persuaded to accept it.

With a family of six children Lawrence had little to offer them in patrimony or in prospects of advancement. On his death in 1652, followed as it was in January, 1654–5, by that of his wife, Amphillis, one, if not two, of his sons looked towards the English colonies in America. The migration from England to the Barbados was at this time large, and it has been conjectured that John Washington, the eldest son of the rector of Purleigh, went to that island before coming to Virginia. This conjecture rested upon the fact of Thomas Pargiter being prominent in the concerns of Barbados, and much interested in advancing the prosperity of that dependency. Some delay in obtaining letters of administration to his mother's will is also taken as evidence of his being out of the country, and a letter from Theodore Pargiter points to his being in Barbados. Whatever basis of fact these conjectures may have, it is certainly known that in 1656 John Washington came to Virginia, as "second man" or mate to Edward Prescott, the captain of a vessel trading with that colony. At this time John was about twenty-five years of age, and thus in the period of full venturous spirit. That he did not at once become a settler is proved by an incident of some picturesque qualities, even for that day.

His employer, Prescott, sometimes described as a merchant, accompanied his vessel in her voyage from England to America in 1658, and encountered so severe storms that he deemed it necessary to placate the

elements with a sacrifice. Among the passengers was one who could pass for a witch, when the demand was urgent, and this woman Prescott ordered to be hung. Upon reaching America Washington laid the matter before the authorities of Maryland, and caused him to be arrested on a suspicion of felony. As the trial was to be held in Maryland, the witnesses must be brought face to face with the accused, and no testimony taken in Virginia would be considered. When the time for the court to sit came round in October, 1659, Washington pleaded an extraordinary occasion. "God willing, I intend to gett my young sonne baptized. All ye company and Gossips being already invited. Besides in this short time witnesses cannot bee got to come over." And he desired a postponement of the cause, the event of which is not known.

The extraordinary occasion doubtless offers an explanation of Washington's settling in Virginia. In Westmoreland County lived Nathaniel Pope, having an estate on Appomattox Creek, which emptied into the Potomac. Pope was a man of some prominence, when even an appointment in the county militia carried weight, and held a commission of lieutenant-colonel from the Governor. He was of some substance, too, having good lands in a colony where land accessible to the waterways was not too easily obtained. He was the agent of some London merchants having interests in Virginia, and cultivated the plant, tobacco, on which the commercial prosperity of the colony was supposed to rest. A daughter, Anne Pope, was now a widow, having recently lost her husband, Walter Brodhurst. Virginia was not favorable to single women who had

a family to support, and marriages were encouraged. Washington was himself a widower, but the name of his first wife has never been discovered. He won the hand of Anne Brodhurst in 1759 and with her received a gift from her father of lands lying on Hallowes Creek, in Westmoreland County. This was in all probability what determined him to make his home in Virginia.

Nathaniel Pope, his father-in-law, was a man of some influence in the colony, and had acted as the lieutenant-governor. The support of such an influence would prove of service to Washington, who is found in 1662 a justice of the peace for the county, to determine all causes not touching life or member, and a vestryman for Appomattox parish. Land hunger prevailed in the new settlement, and John Washington obtained many parcels of land by purchase, or by direct grant from the Governor, showing an increase in goods and standing in the community. The test came in 1675 when an expedition was sent against the Susquehannock Indians, in reprisal for the murder of a settler in Stafford, a neighboring county. The command was given to Colonel John Washington, with directions to make a full and thorough inquisition of the true causes of the Indian outbreak, and, if good cause should be found, to "attacque & doe such Execucons upon ye s^{d} Indians as shall be found necessary and just." These orders were carried into effect with such a display of cruelty and treachery to the Indians as to call out a condemnation from the Governor. The Indian was treated as a pest, to be got rid of by no matter what means. The incident stands as a blot on Washington's character and on the records of colonial Virginia.

Returning from this expedition Washington took his seat in the colonial Assembly. He lost his wife about this time, and before his death, which occurred in 1677, he appears to have married his third wife—Frances, the daughter of Thomas Gerrard and relict of Valentine Peyton. He left a goodly property, even for that day, chiefly in lands, tenements, and growing crops, to be divided among his three children. Nor was he forgetful of his kindred. His sister Martha, who had been left in England, was to be brought over and given a "year's accomodation after her comeing in & four thousand pounds of tobacco & caske." She came accordingly, and was soon married to a substantial planter, Samuel Hayward. The ten commandments and the King's arms were also brought from England for the church of Washington parish, where a funeral sermon was to be delivered. The brother, Lawrence, had settled in Rappahannock, where he led an obscure life, and made an obscure marriage, the name of his wife being in doubt.

Lawrence Washington, the eldest son of John Washington and Anne (Pope), was born on Bridges Creek, and upon his marriage with Mildred, daughter of Colonel Augustine Warner, of Gloucester County, he moved to that county and established himself on the Piankatank River. Of him little is positively known, but he left a large estate and three children, of whom the second alone is of interest in this record. For he was Augustine Washington, the father of George, and inherited the four hundred acres of land lying in Mattox, known as the Wakefield tract, the birthplace of the future general and president. He also acquired

from his sister Mildred, twenty-five hundred acres upon Hunting Creek, in Stafford County, the tract to be later known as Mount Vernon.

Augustine was born about 1694, and on the death of his father in 1698 was taken to England by his mother. She soon married a merchant of Whitehaven, George Gale, but died in 1700–1, leaving the care of her children to the merchant. The two boys, John and Augustine, were sent to the grammar school at Appleby, where they remained until their return to Virginia, about 1715 as is believed. Augustine married in the same year Jane Butler, the daughter of a Westmoreland lawyer, who bore him four children, and died. The success of certain iron mines in Maryland led to an offer from the Principio Company for Augustine's Stafford property, at Accokeek, where iron was known to exist. The mine was opened, and as a shareholder in the undertaking Washington drew some profit, and appears to have made some voyages to England in this connection. In 1730–1 he married Mary, daughter of Colonel Joseph Ball of Epping Forest, a woman of strong character and many admirable qualities, balanced by plainness of manner, and late in life by a querulous disposition. For her has been claimed high descent and a transcendent talent; but no facts can be found to support these claims. Even from the letters of her son may be gathered an impression of a lack of dignity and a proneness to complain at moderate fortune. It required the strong sensibility of Lafayette to see in her the element of the divine which he associated with his beloved chief. Without that sympathy she became commonplace in very ordinary surroundings.

At Wakefield, George Washington was born, February 11 (O. S.), 1732. The event was marked by nothing unusual, and perhaps for that reason has given birth to much legend, tradition, and wonder. The home and the family were of good Virginia stock and beyond that little need be said. Augustine about 1735 moved from Wakefield to an estate higher on the Potomac, a place known by its Indian name of Epsewasson, and one that had been owned by his ancestor, Colonel John Washington, the emigrant. His eldest son Lawrence was sent to England, to attend the school at Appleby, and later Augustine, a younger son, was sent to the same place. The house at Epsewasson appears to have been burnt about 1739, leading to a second move, to a property near Fredericksburg, in King George, now Stafford, county. Lawrence joined the Carthagena expedition under Gooch, as a captain, and served with distinction in that disastrous adventure, returning to Virginia in 1742. No provision for half-pay was made for the colonial forces under Vernon, something of a disappointment to those concerned. In the meanwhile Augustine had grown to be a "pretty young fellow" and had set his heart on the profession of the law, in which his tutor said he would take abundance of pains to shine. It was a question for the father to decide: "I have that opinion of ye lad's goodness y^{t} if he thought it were not agreeable to your sentiments he w^{d} reconcile his thoughts to any other employment you sh^{d} think most expedient to him." The father does not appear to have sympathized with this plan, as Augustine returned to Virginia in 1742, and was in charge of the iron works. He married Anne Aylett.

Augustine, the elder, died April 12, 1743, and tradition states that George was at the time on a visit to a relative at Chotank, returning in answer to a hurried summons, to receive the blessing of his father. The care of the boy now fell to Lawrence, who married in July of this year, Anne, the daughter of William Fairfax. He made his home at Epsewasson, naming the place Mount Vernon, in honor of the admiral with whom he had served in the West Indies. The property left him by his father brought influence and he served in the House of Burgesses. Failing health and the loss of his three children cut his career short.

CHAPTER II

YOUTH

EARLY in his career, Lawrence wished George to go to sea, and offered to give him the necessary recommendations. The suggestion found favor with the young man, but the mother was opposed to his going, first making a faint show of acquiescence. "I am afraid Mrs. Washington will not keep up to her first resolution," wrote Robert Jackson, in September, 1746. "She seems to intimate a dislike to George's going to Sea and says several Persons have told her it 's a very bad Scheme. She offers several trifling objections such as fond and unthinking mothers naturally suggest, and I find that one word against his going has more weight than ten for it. Colº Fairfax seems desirous he should go, and desired me to acquaint you with Mrs. Washington's sentiments. I intend shortly to take an opportunity to talk with her and will let you know her result." In spite of all persuasion the mother's fears could not be laid aside, and they received strong confirmation when the cruelties and sufferings of a sailor's life were set forth to her. The midshipman's

warrant was returned, and the boy returned to his studies.

Where Washington went to school has never been positively ascertained. His half-brothers had been sent to England to be educated; but the early death of his father cut off any expectation of a like voyage for George. There were but few schools in Virginia at this time, although the colonial laws sought to provide a system of schools open to all its inhabitants. The plan was much greater than the performance; and even at the best, the academies, colleges, and schools were but different grades of inefficiency, inadequate instruments to perform the task set before them. As much the same condition of paralysis infected the English colleges, it need not excite wonder that Virginia was not better; for the few earnest and capable teachers could not make up for the imperfections found in every institution for teaching, from the field school up to the college.

Natural aptitude in mathematics did much to advance Washington. Among the first records from his hands are his exercises in mathematics and surveying; and his plats made in the winter of 1747 are evidence at once of his talent and his rapid progress in obtaining the rudiments of the profession. Even at this time, when less than sixteen years of age, he had so far qualified himself as to win a commission from Lord Fairfax to make some surveys of lands in the northern neck of Virginia. In February, 1748, he laid off a plan of Major Lawrence Washington's turnip-field, and in the following month set out on a surveying journey "over the mountains" in company with George William Fairfax, the agent of Lord Fairfax. A full record of this journey

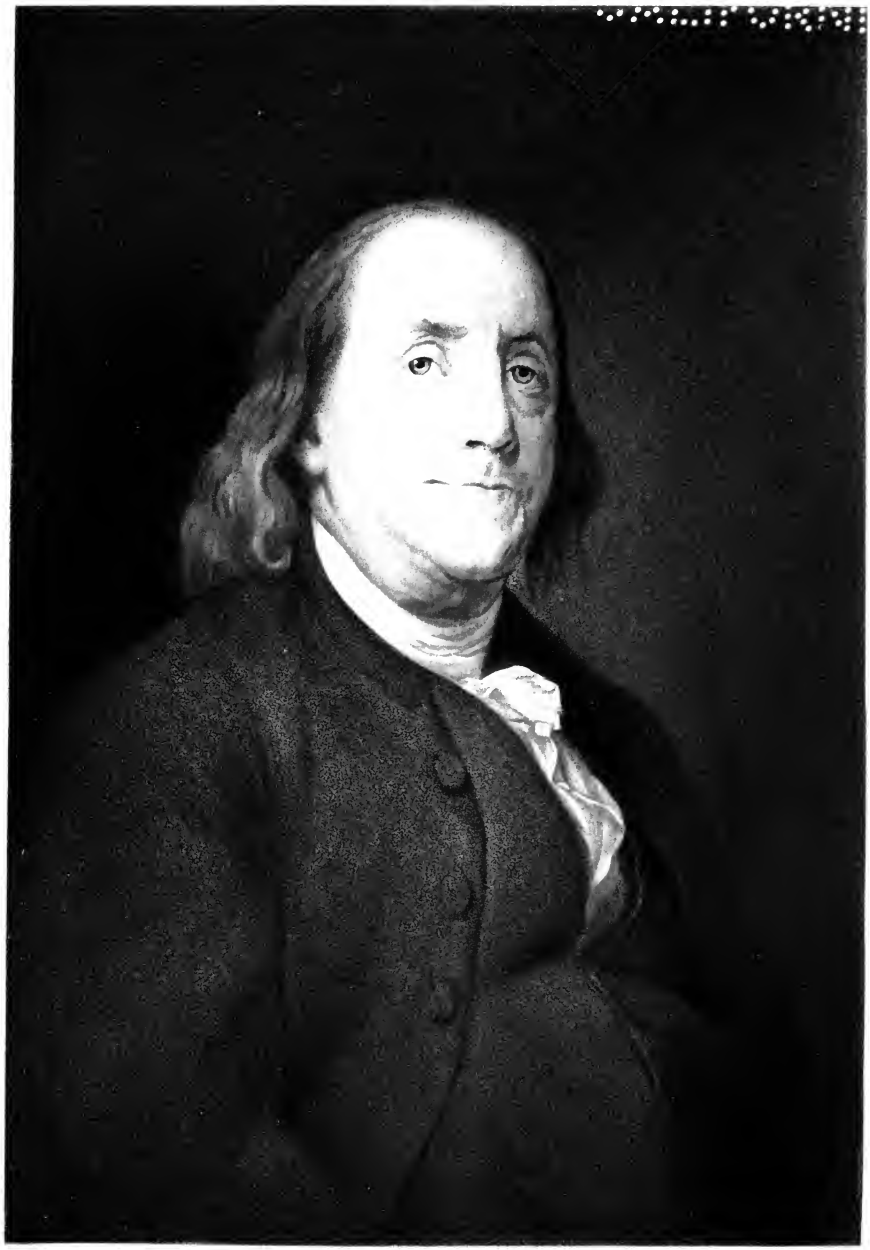
remains, and contains some interesting touches of the youth's personality. All was novel to him, and his confessions are those of inexperience. "We got our Suppers & was Lighted into a Room & I not being so good a Woodsman as ye rest of my Company striped myself very orderly & went in to ye Bed as they called it when to my Surprize I found it to be nothing but a Little Straw—Matted together without Sheets or any thing else but only one thread Bear blanket with double its Weight of Vermin such as Lice Fleas &c. I was glad to get up (as soon as ye Light was carried from us) I put on my Cloths & Layd as my Companions. Had we not been very tired I am sure we should not have slep'd much that night. I made a Promise not to sleep so from that time forward chusing rather to sleep in ye open Air before a fire." A few days after he looked upon a good feather bed, with clean sheets, as "a very agreeable regale."

The course taken by the party led them to the already noted Warm Springs, later known as the Bath or Berkeley Springs, and across the Potomac, along the Maryland side, over "ye worst Road that ever was trod by Man or Beast." To add to their discomfort heavy rain came down, making the streams rise rapidly, and obstructing their progress. On a Wednesday they were agreeably surprised by some Indians returning from war with only one scalp. "We had some Liquor with us of which we gave them part, it elevating there Spirits put them in ye Humour of Dauncing of whom we had a War Daunce. There manner of Dauncing is as follows viz They clear a Large Circle & make a Great Fire in ye middle, then seat themselves around it. Y^e^

Speaker makes a grand Speech telling them in what Manner they are to Daunce. After he has finish'd ye best Dauncer jumps up as one awaked out of a Sleep & Runs & Jumps about ye Ring in a most comicle Manner. He is followed by ye Rest. Then begins there Musicians to Play. Ye Musick is a Pot half full of water, with a Deerskin streched over it as tight as it can, & a goard with some shott in it to rattle & a Piece of an horse's tail tied to it to make it look fine. Ye one keeps rattling & ye others drumming all ye while ye others is Dauncing."

The serious work of the party soon began, to lay off lots on the south branch of the Potomac. For six days the lines were run and the proper markings made, the surveyors camping in a tent, which on one night was carried away in a storm. The young man was training his powers of observation, and the process at times gave odd results. He met a party of Dutch, on their way to the new settlements in the valley, and noted that they seemed to be as ignorant a set of people as the Indians. The only ground for this judgment was that they would never speak English, but when spoken to answered in Dutch. The party then turned homeward, leaving one of the professional surveyors to complete the work, and after an uneventful journey of a week reached Belvoir, whence Washington proceeded to Mount Vernon. The field-work involved excellent training, and put the boy's knowledge to the touch with actual conditions. One of the results was a commission in the following year (1749), from the President and Master of William and Mary College, appointing him to be surveyor of the newly formed county of Culpeper—his first public office.

Though living with his brother at Mount Vernon, George sometimes visited the family at Belvoir and was touched with a liking for Mary Cary, the sister of his hostess, Sarah Fairfax. In very boyish letters, which he copied into his survey book, the record of this incident is found, and in language that hints at an even earlier romance. "Was my affections disengaged I might perhaps form some pleasures in the conversasion of an agreeable Young Lady, as there 's one now lives in the same house with me. but as that is only nourishment to my former affec^{n} for by often seeing her brings the other into my remembrance whereas perhaps was she not often & (unavoidably) presenting herself to my view I might in some measure eliviate my sorrows by burying the other in the grave of Oblivion I am well convinced my heart stands in defiance of all others, but only she thats given it cause enough to dread a second assault and from a different Quarter tho I well know let it have as many attacks as it will from others they cant be more fierce than it has been." In a second, but no more coherent, letter, addressed to "Dear Friend Robin," he again refers to the dangerous temptation he had before him, which only revived his "former Passion for your Low Land Beauty," an epithet that has been attached to many but probably belongs to none enjoying it. "Was I to live more retired from young women I might in some measure eliviate my sorrows, by burying that chaste and troublesome passion in the grave of oblivion or etarnall forgetfulness, for as I am very well assured, that 's the only antidote or remedy that I shall ever be relieved by, or only recess that can administer any cure or help to me, as I am well convinced, was I



ever to attempt anything, I should only get a denial which would be only adding grief to uneasiness." Were these letters actually sent, or were they, like so much else in this little book, mere exercises, an experiment in expressing the first awakenings of the heart?

The Ohio Company, a land and trading venture, in which Lawrence Washington was interested, was formed in 1746, and gave George some of its surveys. That the Ohio was the proper channel for trade both from the South and the Lakes was known to Lawrence, who drew up a sketch or prospectus of the region in 1749, and undoubtedly inspired George with an interest for this western country. "The Lands on Ohio and its numerous Branches are described by all our Traders as vastly rich. The Banks of the River expose Coal in most parts to view. The Indians bring Salt from some Place as yet unknown to our Traders. There are numbers of large Plains clear of Trees and cover'd with white Clover. The Country is generally very level and the River affords Fish in great plenty." Their French rivals had no settlements nearer than the Oubash [Wabash], but exercised a restraint on the English because there was no shelter or place of refuge for the latter. The country should be taken possession of, and a fortified place built at the joining of the Monongahela with the Ohio. The friendship of the Indians should be cemented. "The Indians being no Geographers esteem those the honestest who sell the cheapest, and was the reason why the Indians on Ohio proclaim'd War against the French who were so distressed in their Trade as not to be able to supply the Indians on reasonable Terms, neither can they ever do it, the navigation up the St.

Lawrence being very dangerous, as likewise there are places they are obliged to unload and carry over land from St. Lawrence to ye Lakes and then the Current in some places is vastly strong and on the Lakes very wild and dangerous so that I think the head of Potomack the safest and easiest way the Indian can be supply'd."

This was a scheme that had a potent fascination for the younger brother, George, throughout his life. His earliest journey on the American continent was to the Ohio, and his one great measure of public improvement was the canal system that was intended to connect the Potomac with the Ohio. Lawrence did not improve in health, and became a source of great anxiety to his family. He tried the Warm Springs, but found no relief. He went to England on matters connected with the Ohio Company, but returned after a short visit in no better health. As a Burgess he had calls upon his time and strength, and his many business ventures were exacting. "I hope your Cough is much mended since I saw you last," wrote George to him in May, 1749; "if so likewise hope you have given over the thoughts of leaving Virginia." The younger man was then with his mother, whose term of occupancy of the property at Bridges Creek, which had been left to her by her husband, was about to expire; and she was considering a move to another plot on Deep Run, also willed to her. The privacy and convenience of the holding were threatened by an intention of a neighbor to establish a ferry. As every permission for such a plan must first be approved by the Burgesses, George wrote fully to Lawrence, then attending a session of that body. "It 's reported here that Mr. Spotswood intends to put down the Ferry that

is kept at the Wharf where he now Lives, and that Major Fran^{s} Talliaferro intends to petition the Assembly for an Act to have it kept from his House over against my Mother's Quarter, and right through the very Heart and best of the Land; whereas he can have no other view in it but for the Conveniency of a small Mill he has on the Water side, that will not grind above three months in ye twelve, and the great Inconveniency and prejudice it will be to us, hope it will not be granted; besides, I do not see where he can Possibly have a Landing Place on his side that will be sufficient for a Lawful Landing (by reason of the steepness of the Banks). I think we suffer enough with the Free Ferry, without being troubled with such an unjust and iniquitous Petition as that, but hope as its only a flying report he will consider better of it and drop his pretentions."

This was a well-expressed letter for a lad of sixteen to write, but all his work bears the mark of maturity. For this he was in all probability much indebted to the influence of Lawrence, and his associations with Lord Fairfax and William Fairfax. Among the rough notes to which the year 1748 is assigned, may be seen recorded, "I read to the Reign of K: John," and, "In the Spectators Read to N° 143." Whatever his reading may have done for him, the example of the men around him was more powerful in giving a breadth of view and a mastery of principles better than any theory or book-learning. The details of business came easily to him, and the sense of order, so strongly marked in every record that has come down, denotes at once a source of strength and a limitation. It was from Lawrence that he derived much, and the few records of the brother's

life are of high interest in proving what must have been his influence over George's development. It was only an intelligent man who could have written of the Ohio country as Lawrence wrote; only a liberal minded man who could have pleaded for liberty of belief. "It has ever been my opinion, and I hope it ever will be, that restraints on conscience are cruel in regard to those on whom they are imposed, and injurious to the country imposing them. England, Holland, and Prussia, I may quote as examples, and much more Pennsylvania, which has flourished under that delightful liberty, so as to become the admiration of every man who considers the short time it has been settled. . . . This colony [Virginia] was greatly settled in the latter part of Charles the First's time, and during the usurpation by the zealous churchmen; and that spirit, which was then brought in, has ever since continued; so that, except a few Quakers, we have no dissenters. But what has been the consequence? we have increased by slow degrees, whilst our neighboring colonies, whose natural advantages are greatly inferior to ours, have become populous." He therefore favored the granting of lands to German settlers, without the condition imposed by law of paying parish rates, and maintaining a clergyman of the Church of England.

Even in his sports it was Lawrence's encouragement that urged him on. The pursuit of arms had been the ambition of Lawrence, but the results of the Carthagena expedition were discouraging. None the less he encouraged George, and obtained for him the office of one of the Adjutants-General of Virginia with the rank of Major. In fox-hunting Lawrence was a practised hand,

and rode with the hounds with the Fairfaxes. "His Lordship proposes drawing Mudd Hole tomorrow," ran a note from Belvoir, "first killing a Fox; and then to turn down a Bagged Fox before your door for ye diversion of ye Ladys. . . . We took the Fox yesterday without Hurt." The raising of fine horses was peculiar to Maryland and Virginia, and the annual meetings for racing were, next to the assembling of the Burgesses, the most important event of the year. With the love of hunting went the breeding of hunting-dogs, and the interchange of hounds, with somewhat boastful claims for eminence of breed, was often a subject of correspondence. Cock-fighting was not disdained, and the life in the open air gave a zest to the ruder sports.

Lawrence continued to decline in health, and was urged to try a visit to the West Indies, where the climate might check the progress of his trouble, if not bring relief. Taking George as a companion, he left Virginia towards the end of September, 1751, on a vessel believed to have been a Virginia craft. A sea voyage in that day was long, and the Atlantic was not kind to the travellers. Fishing and copying the ship's log were the amusements of George, and it was only a storm, which lasted for some days, that broke the monotony of the voyage. The large seas "eminently endangered our masts," and after forty-eight hours, even the "seamen seem'd disheartned confessing they never had seen such weather before." The rigging suffered much, and the bread was found to be almost eaten up by weavil and maggot. At last, the steady trade wind set in, "which after near five weeks buffiting & being toss'd by a fickle & Merciless ocean was glad'ening knews." A few days later they

were aroused at four o'clock in the morning by the cry of land, a surprise, for they were far out of their course, and but for this chance sighting of the island might have passed it and not secured their harbor for three or four weeks. It did not speak well for the seamanship of that day, though the log was well kept.

Lawrence Washington, as an officer in the king's army of the Carthagena expedition, would be known to the English commandant at James Fort, which defended Carlisle Bay. Civilities were interchanged on the first days of landing, and a house was obtained in the country, about a mile from town, and standing high so as to give a view of the harbor and shipping, "in such a manner that none can go in or out with out being open to our view." Hardly a day passed without some social event, now a dinner, now a supper; a celebration of the Gunpowder Plot, and a meeting of the Beefsteak and Tripe Club, which from its name must have contained some odd material. The Virginians were charmed with the country, its rich vegetation, its delightful green,—the tropical green so brilliant and yet so restful to the eye, —and the companionship offered. Major Clarke, the commander, was unremitting in his kindness and courteous attention, though it involved an unfortunate experience for the younger Washington. On a Thursday he "was treated with a play ticket by Mr. Carter, to see the Tragedy of George Barnwell acted: the character of Barnwell and several others was said to be well perform'd, there was Musick a Dapted and regularly conducted by Mr. ———." Two days after he was strongly attacked with the smallpox, a disease that was known to be in the Clarke household, and for more

than three weeks he was not permitted to go out of his quarters. The attack was not so severe as was thought, but George carried the marks in his face for the remainder of his life. In another week he prepared for his homeward journey, after a six weeks' stay on the island, which brought no relief to Lawrence and had imposed a heavy illness on George. So short a stay could not have had any marked effect on the pulmonary disease under which Lawrence was sinking, and he was urged to remain at least a year, to have a full trial of the climate. George returned to Virginia, and some weeks later Lawrence went to Bermuda. In April he wrote from that island: "I have now got to my last refuge, where I must receive my final sentence, which at present Dr. Forbes will not pronounce. He leaves me, however, I think, like a criminal condemned, though not without hopes of reprieve. But this I am to obtain by meritoriously abstaining from flesh of every sort, all strong liquors, and by riding as much as I can bear. These are the only terms on which I am to hope for life. . . . As my endeavor to overcome this cruel disorder has already cost me much money and fatigue, I should unwillingly give over the pursuit whilst any just foundation for hope remains. Six weeks will determine me what to resolve on. Forbes advises the south of France, or else Barbadoes."

The letter was written in a somewhat hopeless tone, very natural to one contending with a disease that must run its course. A few weeks afterwards his courage gave out, and he wrote even more despondently. "The unhappy state of health which I labor under, makes me uncertain as to my return. If I grow worse, I shall

hurry home to my grave; if better, I shall be induced to stay longer here to complete a cure." It was not to be, however, and in July he returned to Virginia in a very low condition, dying at Mount Vernon, 26 July, 1752. By his wife he had four children, only one of whom, his daughter, Sarah, survived him. To her was left Mount Vernon, and fearing she too was short-lived, the property was to go to George in the event of her death. She did not survive her father more than a few months, and thus the place so intimately associated with George Washington came into his possession. It was Lawrence who gave to it the name of Mount Vernon, but it was George who made it so known and respected as to be neutral ground in a bitter civil war. In the death of his half-brother, George lost his best adviser, and an influence which, short as it had been, left a lasting impress on his mind and habits of thought.

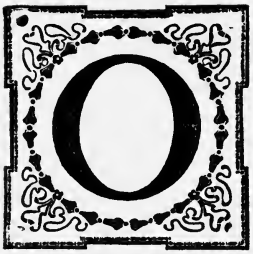
After his return from Barbados, George was at Mount Vernon, and was taken with a "violent pleurise, which has reduced me very low." In June he was so far recovered as to attend the theatrical performances of a company of comedians from the new theatre at Williamsburg, who were playing at Williamsburg during the June fair.

The young man was too much occupied as manager of his mother's and his own properties to take many pleasures. The comparative isolation of a Virginia plantation made visits few and far between, but he was forming acquaintances and friends who came forward, when occasion called, to give him a full and ready assistance. By his property and family, he was destined at some time to take his seat in the House of Burgesses,

the legislature of the colony. The favor shown to him by Lord Fairfax was ever a helpful influence, for his power was great and his possessions comprised a little kingdom, in which his word would be law if the land should ever be dotted with tenantry. No governor of the colony could overlook the importance of the Fairfax interest, and it was only natural for the favorites of the self-exiled baron to be regarded well at Williamsburg. There is no evidence of a dominant care or fatherly interest shown at Greenway Court for the young George; but the mere fact of friendship and intercourse had a marked agency in bringing George forward. The men he met in this intercourse were those who held within their gift the offices and honors of the colony; but it was Lawrence who gave him the ability and patient study, with the necessary breadth of mind, to seize his opportunities and make the most of them. How well George had laid the foundations of his friendships, his whole career proved; but no incident was more to the point than his first public employment.

CHAPTER III

FORT NECESSITY



RIGINALLY formed for colonizing the back parts of Virginia, the Ohio Company was primarily an enterprise to secure the trade of the western country. Formed in 1749 it was comprised of twenty shareholders, who at once began to lay siege to the ministry for a grant of extensive territory, not less than six hundred thousand acres, and as extensive privileges over its control. To state and assert their rights or claims they appointed an agent in England, and sent Christopher Gist, a trained backwoodsman, to lay the foundations of a storehouse on the Ohio. The half-brother of Washington, Lawrence, was interested, and the Governor of the Colony was also enlisted as a useful and perhaps a powerful ally. At Will's Creek the storehouse was located, and about a dozen families settled in its neighborhood. One danger threatened their safety, the pretensions of the French, now taking a positive form in an expedition of so-called discovery and occupation down the Ohio River. Rumors reached the English of the planting of lead plates as

symbols of possession, and dealings with the Indians looking towards a recognition of the French as their allies and masters.

The colonies were not unmindful of their safety. They looked with distrust upon the progress of the French to the north, and fretted at the presence of the Spanish to the south. The importance of the Mississippi, both in a military and commercial aspect, could not be fully appreciated, and yet the territory between the ocean and that river was looked upon as English ground. The fur trade alone made its occupation desirable, and the friendship of the Indian tribes of that region was an essential element in securing that trade. Any advance of the French, either in territory or in cultivating relations with the Indians, excited the jealousies and apprehensions of the English colonists. The governors were granting lands, licensing traders to conduct the trade with the Indians, and settlers were pushing their way through the woods, over the mountains, and towards the great Ohio valley and the Mississippi. Nor was the rivalry among the English settlements of a friendly nature. The prize to be sought, a monopoly of the fur trade, was too rich to be lightly neglected. New York held a position of vantage, and had established a large and profitable trade by way of Albany. Pennsylvania proposed to build a road over the mountains to the Ohio, hoping by that means to draw some of this trade to her own account. Virginia was more to be feared as a rival than New York, and was quite as intent upon securing an easy communication to the west. The two colonies laid claims to the same territory, and the settlements of one in the disputed sections led

to reprisals and threats of war. To complicate matters, land rights, covering the same acres, were issued by the rival governors. The cession from the Indians was made generally to the English; but no line marked the bounds between Virginia and Pennsylvania, and the first move of Virginia to form settlements in this country aroused the jealousy of Pennsylvania, and in the end resulted in armed expeditions and almost a civil war.

The English ministry noticed these advances of the French, and sent positive orders to the colonial governors to require the subjects of any foreign powers trespassing or building forts on the territory claimed, to desist from any such unlawful undertakings, and to use force should their demands be disregarded. Dinwiddie was prompt to act, summoned the Assembly to vote an aid, and dividing the Dominion into four districts, appointed an adjutant in each one to direct the raising and training of the militia. The Burgesses, not in the best of humor, refused to vote any money, and the Governor determined to send a messenger with a letter to the French commandant on the Ohio. The executive of Pennsylvania, learning of this, decided to await the event of the mission before taking steps on its own account. Dinwiddie notified Governor Hamilton of his action, saying he had sent a person of distinction as the bearer of the mandate, and this person was Washington.

The risks of the venture were more than compensated by the opportunity for adventure and the reward of success. The eagerness of the young messenger was shown by his starting from Fredericksburg on his journey the same day the commission was received. His desire to be successful was proved in his selection

of companions. Jacob Van Braam was a Hollander, who had served under Lawrence Washington in the Carthagena expedition, and had also taught George the use of the sword. He was further desirable in this journey because he could understand French, and so act as an interpreter. After providing themselves with horses, baggage, and necessaries, the two followed the new road to Will's Creek, arriving there two weeks after leaving Fredericksburg. Here they were joined by Christopher Gist, a man long in the service of Pennsylvania, skilled in woodcraft and well acquainted with the Indians, making a valuable guide and counselor. Four servitors completed the little company, and a start was made in November.

Excessive rains and vast quantities of snow checked their progress; their horses strayed and detained them; and from seven to ten miles a day were accounted a fair rate. At length the banks of the Ohio were reached, but no crossing could be made without swimming the horses. A canoe was obtained, and while waiting for it, Washington made notes on the military features of the country. His keen eye showed him that the place selected for a fort by the Ohio Company was not the best available, either for defense or general advantages. The natural lay of the land made it difficult to build as the Company had planned, whereas at the fork, a fort would have full command of both the Ohio and the Monongahela, and the latter river was admirable for water carriage, a matter of great importance.

The success of this venture rested on the assistance of the Indians. To obtain their countenance involved some little delicacy of approach, for they had been as

severely harried by the English as by the French, and had come to look upon the pushing colonists with distrust. The hunters invaded their territory, the traders cheated them both buying and selling, and the settler looked upon a land warrant from the governor as a full title to what the native could claim only by right of prescription and occupation. Fortunately for Washington, the French commandant had just given great offense to the Half-King. Alarmed by the encroachments of the French, the Indian had gone to the General to remind him of the treaty made with the natives and to request that no further seizure of land be made. "You need not put yourself to the trouble of speaking," was the insolent reply, "for I will not hear you. I am not afraid of flies, or musquitos, for Indians are such as those. I tell you, down that river I will go, and will build upon it, according to my command. . . . If people will be ruled by me, they may expect kindness, but not else."

With such an answer still ringing in their ears, the Indians met Dinwiddie's messenger in a friendly spirit, and took counsel with him on the measures to be taken. Washington, had his real mission been known to them, would have been no more welcome than the French. He represented the English land grabber as the French general had represented the French interests, and neither would in the event recognize any claim set forth by the Indians. It is not to be denied that Washington used some concealment of his purpose, merely stating that he had an important message to be delivered to the French. Of the nature of that request he said nothing, and avoided answering the curious

questioning of the natives. The formalities of intercourse made delays for him, as the belt of wampum, of immense significance to the chiefs, was to be returned to the French, and could be obtained only after some days. While reluctantly awaiting the arrival of this symbol of friendship, the return of which implied war, Washington parried the curiosity of the sachems, yet doing all in his power to comply with their wishes. For four days he chafed under this delay, and finally started with four of the Indians as guards, the Half-King being one of the party. A larger escort of Indians, it was thought, might awaken the suspicions of the French.

On December 4th, nearly five weeks after setting out on the journey, the old Indian town at the mouth of French Creek, on the Ohio, was reached. Here the French had hoisted their colors, and received the Virginians with great complaisance. In the flush of their hospitality, when somewhat heated with wine, they became confidential and spoke freely of their intentions to hold the Ohio, towards which four forts were already garrisoned. The location of these stations and the force holding them were subjects that interested Washington, and from his genial entertainers he gained all the information he needed. In return he was forced to give something—his Indian allies. Under the beguiling influences of the words of the half-breed, Joncaire, and of the wine, with which they were freely plied, they became incapable of performing the business on which they had come. The Delawares refused to recognize them as messengers of war, and could not be prevailed on to give up their belt of wampum.

The Half-King insisted upon remaining over a day, that he might give his message to the French, but the council proved of no service, as Washington had foreseen. Only the commander of the French forces could properly receive the belt, and he was at the fort. Because of the rain, snow, swamps, and swollen creeks, four days were occupied in the journey. The party was obliged to abandon one of their horses, and, unable to find logs for a raft, could not cross the main creek. Finally the fort was reached, and Washington offered his letter to the commandant, Legardeur de St. Pierre, a man well advanced in life, but of soldierly bearing. While the contents were being considered in council of war, Washington examined the situation and condition of the fort, the distribution of the buildings, and the size of the garrison, even counting the number of canoes on the bank of the river.

Again were the Indians a source of delay. The Virginian looked with suspicion upon all the movements of the French. They planned to separate him from his native allies; they refused to receive the belt and promised gifts, corrupting the loyalty of the chiefs; on the plea of going to Logstown for those gifts, he saw a scheme to intercept and arrest any English trader to be met. Anxious as he was to leave, he could not go without an answer to Dinwiddie's letter and summons, but every day made his relations with the Indians more uncertain. He plead with the Half-King, but was told the French commandant would not permit him to go. He complained of ill treatment to the commandant, as keeping the Indians was keeping him; but he was met by protests of good faith, and assertions that the

Indians were free to go. It was not until later that he learned of an offer of a present of guns, to induce the Indians to delay; and so large was the bribe, that it was with the greatest difficulty they could be drawn away.

As there had been much snow, the horses had been sent on ahead to Venango, towards which Washington and his party went by water. "Many times were obliged all hands to get out and remain in the water half an hour or more, getting over the shoals." The progress was slow, tedious, and dangerous. Some of the French had followed them. "We had the pleasure," hard old Gist wrote, of seeing the French overset, and the brandy and wine floating in the creek. A stop was made at Venango, and again was the Half-King tempted to remain and listen to the proffers of the wily Joncaire. Finding the horses growing weaker each day, they were used only for carrying the baggage. Even this concession of comfort did not bring improvement. "I put myself in an Indian walking dress, and continued with them three days, till I found there was no probability of their getting home in any reasonable time. The horses grew less able to travel every day; the cold increased very fast; and the roads were becoming much worse by a deep snow, continually freezing; therefore as I was uneasy to get back, to make report of my proceedings to his Honour, the Governor, I determined to prosecute my journey the nearest way through the woods, on foot."

Such a step involved serious peril. With his gun in hand and his pack on his back, with only Gist for a companion, he started on a long journey in midwinter, through a desolate country. Huts or settlements were

far distant, and a wily and treacherous foe was behind him, with a real interest in preventing him from reaching his goal. He was not accustomed to make long marches on foot, and it was for this reason that even Gist sought to dissuade him from undertaking the hazard. Mere snow and ice were not the evils to be most dreaded. The fatigue of forced marches, and the almost certainty of opposition from the French and their Indians, were greater perils, and seemed to make success impossible. Of what did happen to the travellers Washington gave a bare mention, though it involved serious danger to him. He enters in his journal the meeting with some French Indians who had lain in wait for them, one of whom had fired at Gist or himself, not fifteen steps off, but fortunately missed. Gist is a better remembrancer of this exciting incident.

"Here we met with an Indian, whom I thought I had seen at Joncaire's, at Venango, when on our journey up to the French fort. This fellow called me by my Indian name, and pretended to be glad to see me. He asked me several questions, as how we came to travel on foot, when we left Venango, where we parted with our horses, and when they would be there, &c. Major Washington insisted on travelling on the nearest way to the forks of the Alleghany. We asked the Indian if he could go with us, and show us the nearest way. The Indian seemed very glad and ready to go with us. Upon which we set out, and the Indian took the Major's pack. We travelled very brisk for eight or ten miles, when the Major's feet grew very sore, and he very weary, and the Indian steered too much northeastwardly. The Major desired to encamp, to which the

Indian asked to carry his gun, but he refused that, and then the Indian grew churlish, and pressed us to keep on, telling us that there were Ottawa Indians in these woods, and they would scalp us if we lay out; but go to his cabin, and we would be safe. I thought very ill of the fellow, but did not care to let the Major know I distrusted him. But he soon distrusted him as much as I. He said he could hear a gun to his cabin, and steered us more northwardly. We grew uneasy, and then he said two whoops might be heard to his cabin. We went two miles further; then the Major said he would stay at the next water, and we desired the Indian to stop at the next water. But before we came to water, we came to a clear meadow; it was very light, and snow on the ground. The Indian made a stop, turned about; the Major saw him point his gun toward us and fire. Said the Major, 'Are you shot?' 'No,' said I. Upon which the Indian run forward to a big standing white oak, and to loading his gun; but we were soon with him. I would have killed him; but the Major would not suffer me to kill him. We let him charge his gun; we found he put in a ball; then we took care of him. The Major or I always stood by the guns; we made him make a fire for us by a little run, as if we intended to sleep there. I said to the Major, 'As you will not have him killed, we must get him away, and then we must travel all night.' Upon which I said to the Indian, 'I suppose you were lost and fired your gun.' He said, he knew the way to his cabin, and 't was but a little way. 'Well,' said I, 'do you go home, and as we are much tired, we will follow your track in the morning; and here is a cake of bread for

you, and you must give us meat in the morning.' He was glad to get away. I followed him, and listened until he was fairly out of the way, and then we set out about half a mile, when we made a fire, set our compass, and fixed our course, and travelled all night, and in the morning we were on the head of Piney Creek." As a simple relation of endurance, bravery, and mercy the story holds a high place; as a description of the leading elements of Washington's character, even at this early period, it is worth more than the thousand and one legends that have grown round his life.

Nor did the Indians constitute the only peril besetting the travellers. Upon reaching the Alleghany River, which they expected to find frozen over, they recognized the impossibility of crossing. The ice extended about fifty feet from each shore, but the river was open between, and immense quantities of ice were being carried down by the swift current. With no tools save one poor hatchet, the task of making a raft occupied them all day, and just after sunset they launched it and started on their perilous crossing. "But before we were Half way over, we were jammed in the Ice, in such a Manner that we expected every Moment our Raft to sink, and ourselves to perish. I put out my setting Pole to try to stop the Raft, that the Ice might pass by; when the Rapidity of the Stream threw it with so much violence against the Pole, that it jerked me out into ten Feet Water: but I fortunately saved myself by catching hold of one of the Raft Logs." They found that they could not cross the river, and quitted their raft to land on an island, where the night was spent. So severe was the cold that Gist had all of his

fingers and some of his toes frozen, in spite of which they made their way the next day to Frazier's.

This adventure was not the end of their troubles. Although they were now near the settlements, it was difficult to procure horses. While waiting for these, Washington gave evidence of his practical sagacity, for he used the interval to visit an Indian, Queen Aliquippa, whose sensibilities had been touched by his omitting to call upon her on his first passing. Her hurt feelings were easily soothed. "I made her a present of a match coat and a bottle of rum; which latter was thought much the best present of the two." It was the coming of Washington, however, that enabled her to admit that he was not unmindful of her influence and authority.

Horses were at length obtained, and each day slowly shortened the distance to be overcome, not without incident. A train of seventeen horses was encountered, carrying materials and stores for a fort at the forks of the Ohio, showing that the authorities had not been idle while he was on his mission. Some families, too, were on their way to this new settlement, undeterred by the reports of warlike Indians, of massacres, and the trials of a mid-winter existence in those remote and helpless regions. Washington could tell of his experiences and what he had learned from some Indian warriors, of settlers killed and scalped on their little holdings, and no trace of their murderers or of the cause of so cruel a vengeance, gruesome evidence of the implacable enmity between the natives and the intruding whites.

At length, nearly ten weeks after setting out on his journey, Washington reached the friendly shelter of Belvoir, where he remained one day to take a necessary

rest. On the 16th of January, 1754, he delivered the letter of the French commandant into the hands of the Governor, thus practically ending the task set before him. "I hope what has been said," he writes as the closing sentence of his narrative, "will be sufficient to make your Honour satisfied with my conduct; for that was my aim in undertaking the journey, and chief study throughout the prosecution of it."

The measure of his success is not to be weighed by what he tells in his journal. The great object had been accomplished. Notice had been served on the French that they would be regarded and treated as trespassers, their fort or station would be taken, and they themselves expelled from the country by force. The claims of the English were asserted, and their full intention of making those claims good was made known. The Indians had been judiciously told to regard the English as their friends, and to look to them for protection against the manifestly hostile appearance of the French. Between two advancing waves of occupation the natives were bewildered, and hesitated where to look for countenance. It was a far-sighted measure to court their alliance at such a juncture, and the young Virginian performed this very difficult part of his mission with discretion and with the promise of good results. The information gained was not palatable to the colonies, and was viewed with suspicion, being looked upon as a fiction to promote the interests of a private company. The Burgesses, already at odds with the Governor, refused to make any appropriations for repelling the French.

Dinwiddie, having prorogued the Assembly to meet

again in April, took the advice of his Council and determined to send two hundred men to build a fort on the Ohio and resist any attack the French or their allies might make. Washington, still an adjutant of one of the four military districts and holding the rank of major, was commissioned to command one hundred men to be raised of the militia in Frederick and Augusta—an advance corps of a larger force the Governor hoped to obtain from the Assembly. A second company of one hundred men was to be raised among the Indian traders and commanded by William Trent, a man of influence in both Virginia and Pennsylvania, and in business relations with Benjamin Franklin. Maryland promised cooperation, and the Indians only waited for the forces of the English to appear before they came out in their favor, for the stronger party would inevitably win their support. Time was an important element, as the French intended to bring a larger force down the river in the spring. Urged by these considerations the Governor summoned the Assembly to meet in February, and at the opening of the session he laid before them the results of Washington's mission, with rumors of barbarities committed on the frontier settlers by Indians, at the instigation, it was believed, of the French. The cannon, powder, and ordnance stores given by the King had arrived, and been sent forward ; and it only remained for the Colony to do its part by voting a proper supply. The appeal was successful in the main purpose, and £10,000 were voted, but so "clogged with unreasonable regulations and encroachments on the prerogative," that Dinwiddie hesitated to accept it. He noted that the Burgesses were "very much in a republican way of

thinking," but was enabled to plan for six companies of men to march as soon as ready to the rendezvous, Will's Creek, at the head of the Potomac River. Messages were sent to the friendly Indians to ask their aid.

Recruiting was by no means an easy matter. Washington, who had been sent to Lord Fairfax for one half of his force, was met by a great disinclination among the militia to serve, encouraged in this by some of their officers. This so displeased the Governor that he ordered new commissions to be prepared, and wished the captious officers to be made conscious of his displeasure. Objections were made to the times of payment, and this was not unreasonable when it is remembered the men had heretofore been paid in tobacco and not in money. One month after receiving his instructions Washington had obtained only twenty-five men, and those were of the "loose, idle persons, that are quite destitute of house and home, and, I may truly say, many of them of cloathes." The time of service was uncertain, and to encourage them to settle in the new parts the Governor offered two hundred thousand acres of land, free of quit-rent for fifteen years, to such as should enlist. As it turned, this land was claimed by Pennsylvania, which was somewhat backward in giving assistance and was made all the more reluctant by this apparent invasion of its rights.

The selection of commander was not at once accomplished. Colonel William Fairfax was at first intended, and the reason of his declining is not known. The choice then fell upon Colonel Joshua Fry, a man of good sense and an able mathematician. There was a dearth of good officers, well acquainted with the arts of

war; but the Governor did the best he could with what was offered, and "as our cause is just, I hope for the protection of Heaven." A commission as lieutenant-colonel was given to Washington, partly on his own request and partly from the efforts of his friend, Richard Corbin. The general instructions were to erect a fort on the fork of the Monongahela, where it would command that river and the Ohio, and to resist by force, if necessary, the intrusion of the French.

Alarming intelligence was received from Trent, who was on the Monongahela with seventy men erecting a fort. Washington was ordered forward, and impressing wagons along the route, even to straining the law, he pushed on with the seventy-five "self-willed and ungovernable people" who had been enrolled in his company. Before reaching Will's Creek he learned that the fort, carelessly guarded, had fallen into the hands of the French. Some friendly Indians joined him, bringing assurances of the good faith of the Half-King. Calling a council of war, it was decided to push forward to within forty miles of the fallen fort, there to raise a fortification sufficiently strong to keep the road open. The arrival of a complete independent company from South Carolina, and the expectation of another company from North Carolina and two companies from New York, promised a combined force strong enough to hold the position to be taken on Red Stone Creek until the French had brought up their cannon. Every delay told in favor of Virginia because of the influence on the Indians.

On May 9th, after two weeks of laborious road building, Washington had only reached the "Meadows," twenty miles from his objective point, and where a bridge

must be constructed before further advance could be made. Intelligence reached him through traders of the rapid increase in strength of the French, and their activity in raising defensive posts on the river. Presents were being sent to the Indians, and no effort spared to win their alliance or secure their remaining passive in the coming struggle for possession of the Ohio. The full equipment and rapid movements of the French offered a strong contrast to the inefficient and overburdened little army under Washington; but everything possible with the means at hand was done by him and not without good results. Baffled in making a direct road to Red Stone, he took a canoe to explore the river, and test the possibility of reaching his destination by water. In this he was disappointed; but on his return he was met by a note from the Half-King giving warning of a French force sent out against him. Prudence induced him to return to the Meadows where "with nature's assistance," he made a good entrenchment, and, by clearing the bushes, prepared a "charming field for an encounter."

Having obtained a defensible position, Washington sent out a party to discover the whereabouts of the French, and leaving a guard in the camp, himself led a small force at night to hold a council with the Half-King, then known to be approaching the Meadows. The result of the meeting was a determination to attack the French first. After an affair of a quarter of an hour, "We killed Mr. de Jumonville, the commander of the party, with nine others; we wounded one, and made twenty-one prisoners." Thus ended Washington's first experience under fire. "I fortunately escaped without

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any wound," he wrote to his brother, "for the right wing, where I stood, was exposed to and received all the enemy's fire, and it was the part where the man was killed, and the rest wounded. I heard the bullets whistle, and believe me, there is something charming in the sound." This boast called out from the King "He would not say so, if he had been used to hear many."

Immediate reprisals were to be expected, and the French force at a short distance from the Meadows was known to be greatly in excess of that under Washington. A fort with small palisadoes was laid out and some Indians came, with their wives and children, a useless burden when it was difficult to procure provisions for the fighting men. Before a week had passed, the last body of the Virginia regiment, under the command of Major Muse, arrived. The death of Fry at Will's Creek, on May 31st, gave Washington the command, but in sending his commission, the Governor informed him that Innes had been appointed commander in chief of all the forces. In this appointment Washington acquiesced.

The pay of the officers in the Virginia regiment was below that of the corresponding grades in the independent companies, below that fixed for the regular army of the King. Not only was it lower in amount, but deductions were made bringing it to so low a point as to give the officers no compensation for hard service and great personal sacrifices. The difference between the royal and colonial establishment was too great to escape attention, and gave rise to much dissatisfaction among the officers under Washington. They threatened to resign in a body. As for himself, he would hold his

commission, but serve voluntarily. "To be slaving dangerously for the shadow of pay, through woods, rocks, mountains,—I would rather prefer the great toil of a daily laborer, and dig for a maintenance, provided I were reduced to the necessity, than serve upon such ignoble terms." Such language gave great displeasure to the Governor, who had many troubles of his own, and called out a rebuke which, however harsh in sound, was really just and intended in a friendly chiding. Repeating his complaints about insufficient pay, Washington admitted the generous favors of the Governor. "Nothing is a greater stranger to my breast, or a sin that my soul more abhors, than that black and detestable one, ingratitude."

Seeds of difference were sown by the orders of the English ministry. Two independent companies were directed to be sent from New York, and one from South Carolina, and they were a more regular body than any militia, being in his Majesty's service. The officers of those companies were experienced in the military art, had served in several campaigns, and in consequence were jealous of their honor. Dinwiddie was so well aware of the disinclination of the militia to serve with the regulars that he kept the orders secret until the militia had marched. To James Innes, an old man in command of the North Carolina Company, he wrote, "I think your command from me must be by a commission superior to any I have yet granted," a thought that would give him rank even over Fry. Yet when James Mackay came in command of his Independent Company, from South Carolina, Colonel Fry was warned by the Governor against possible differences in rank. "You are

by me appointed commander in chief on the expedition, but as it is not usual to have the regular Forces under his Majesty's immediate commission to be under the command of an officer in America appointed by any of the governors; yet, that there may be no misunderstanding or delay in the expedition, I recommend you to shew a due regard to those troops of his Majesty, and shew this officer and the others in that station as much indulgence as is in your power." The same note was given to Washington, and thus three commanders —Fry, Innes, and Mackay—were to hold undetermined rank, equal in name but open to every opportunity for difference that jealousy could afford.

The presence of Mackay hastened the necessity of coming to some decision on the question of command. Holding commissions from the King, the Carolinians looked upon themselves as a distinct body, and would not incorporate or do duty with the Virginians, keeping a separate camp and placing separate guards. Mackay would not even receive the parole and countersign from Washington. Two commanders in such a situation were so incompatible that they could not be useful to one another or to the public, and the Virginian confidently asserted that the absence of Mackay would tend to the public advantage. The troop of Virginia had performed the hard work of the march, and were unwilling to accept their commands from Mackay, whose men, better paid and fed, were unwilling to work on the road save for extra pay. The two forces separated, that of Washington moving forward to complete the road and to confer with the Indians, friendly and hostile.

On June 28th, Mackay again joined Washington. Learning that the French had been reinforced, they determined to retreat to their works at the Great Meadows, now known as Fort Necessity. A few days later the French, intent upon avenging the death of Jumonville, reached the ground so recently occupied by Washington, and after the delay of only one day, attacked the English. The two forces were very unequal in numbers, the French having about fifteen hundred men, and Washington less than three hundred. With the French were many Indians; while those who had joined the English advised a retreat, and many of them acted upon the suggestion. About nine o'clock on the morning of July 3d, the French and their Indians advanced towards the camp with shouts and dismal yells, and firing at so great a distance that little harm was done. The English, drawn up before their entrenchments, reserved their fire, and made no reply to a second discharge by the French within sixty yards of the lines. Retiring within the entrenchments the colonists opened fire on the enemy, and the engagement continued all day. In the afternoon a most severe downpour of rain filled the trenches with water, wet all the ammunition and stores, and left nothing for defense but a few bayonets, with which only a part of the guns were provided. The French, sheltered behind trees, poured a galling fire into the works, and it was only a question of a short time before the end must come.

The French offered a parley, but the English distrusted the request, fearing some stratagem for drawing them into the open. They then wished an officer to be sent out, giving their parole for his safe return. Two

officers were thus sent, and received the proposals for a capitulation. The terms, as originally framed, were not accepted, and underwent some modification; but in the end were agreed to, as one third of the company, officers as well as men, were by that time killed or wounded. A misunderstanding grew out of the articles of capitulation, destined to play quite a prominent part in the future discussion of this affair.

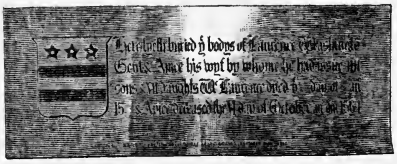
Only two men were with Washington who were acquainted with the French tongue. The Chevalier de Peyroney was badly wounded, and Van Braam, a fencing teacher and old soldier, was sent to complete the negotiation. It is certain that Van Braam blundered seriously in his interpretation of the articles, but probably through ignorance. The English force were to be permitted to retire without insult or injury, with all the honors of war, and with drum and cannon to evidence an act of friends. The prisoners taken at the killing of Jumonville were to be delivered up to the French, and as sureties for the due performance of the agreement Van Braam and Robert Stobo were to be held as hostages. So far the meaning was clear. But in the first paragraph the expedition was described as one intended to avenge the assassination of the French officer, and in a later article the French prisoners were said to have been taken at the assassination of Sieur de Jumonville.

That Washington would deliberately acknowledge to have made an admission that Jumonville was assassinated was hardly possible. He claimed to have wilfully or ignorantly been deceived by the interpreter in regard to the word assassination. Both Mackay and Stephen insisted that the word had not been used by the interpreter;

but the account by Stephen of the conditions under which the articles were signed—"it rained so hard, that he could not give us a written translation of them; we could scarcely keep the candle lighted to read them by"—offers a reasonable explanation for any error. Even Washington was severe upon Van Braam, a Dutchman, little acquainted with the English tongue, who spoke of the death or loss of Jumonville, and did not use a literal translation of the objectionable word in the French articles. So poor Van Braam bore the blame, and Dinwiddie did not hesitate to characterize him as a poltroon, who had joined the French. Villiers boasted that he had made the English confess to an assassination, and the word was undoubtedly twice used in the articles of capitulation.

On the following day the English marched away under due forms, but had not gone far on the road, before they were annoyed and plundered by the Indians, who committed all kinds of irregularities. This was contrary to the capitulation, but they were fortunate in escaping with their lives. Leaving the sick and wounded about three miles from the Meadows, Washington pushed on to Winchester, where the two companies from North Carolina were encountered. These were directed to go to Will's Creek and there establish a post, known as Fort Cumberland, sufficiently strong to guard the frontiers. Washington himself went to Williamsburg to render an account of the affair. He could not entirely escape censure. The capitulation when it became known required explanation, and while the account was satisfactory on the whole, he could not be entirely freed from the blame attaching to the act. Even the Indians

criticised his conduct, and apparently with some justice. The naïve and not entirely disinterested statement of the Half-King pointed out defects of management clearly proving an undeveloped character. "The Half-King complained very much of the behaviour of Col. Washington to him (tho' in a very moderate way, saying the Col. was a good-natured man but had no experience), saying that he took upon him to command the Indians as his slaves, and would have them every day upon the out scout and attack the enemy by themselves, and that he would by no means take advice from the Indians; that he lay at one place from one full moon to the other and made no fortifications at all, but that little thing upon the Meadow, where he thought the French would come up to him in open field; that had he taken the Half-King's advice and made such fortifications as the Half-King advised him to make, he would certainly have beat the French off; that the French had acted as great cowards, and the English as fools in that engagement."



CHAPTER IV

BRADDOCK

REFLECTING after the catastrophe, Dinwiddie laid it to the delay of Innes and the New York companies. He gave directions for the erection of a log fort in some suitable place, to be garrisoned by the independent companies, until a new body of troops could be raised. As Virginia would maintain only her own regiment, the defense fell upon that Colony. While each dependency was acting for its own interests and refused to unite heartily with one another in a common cause, aid was needed from Great Britain, if the French were to be dislodged. It was next to useless to look to the Assemblies, as they were obstinately opposed to making grants of money without some restrictions, unpalatable to the governors and authorities in England. Dinwiddie was reaching the end of his appropriation, and reluctantly prepared to face his Burgesses with a new demand. Maryland proposed to send a company to Will's Creek, and to establish a much-needed magazine for stores and provisions. Pennsylvania and New York still remained inactive or inefficient, and little was

expected from the southern colonies. The forces of North Carolina were mutinous, and disbanding, marched home of their own accord. The Indians friendly to the English had retired into Pennsylvania, and it only remained to complete the Virginia regiments by new inducements or measures of compulsion.

For the privates were in a bad humor. They had seen apparent favoritism shown to the men of other colonies, and had borne the full weight of the toil of an unsuccessful campaign. They had neither been properly fed nor clothed, and were now refractory and mutinous, some of the men even deserting with their guns. This happened in the regiment commanded by Washington, against whom no complaint of ill conduct could be made. The Major—George Muse by name—had not endured the test of actual battle, and was permitted to resign ; but his cowardice added to the grievances of the men, who naturally looked for their officers to inspire them in a crisis. An unpunished mutiny in the North Carolina companies encouraged others to adopt the same method for obtaining redress, and resulted in a deplorable laxity of that discipline so necessary to an army whatever its size.

Such troubles did not turn the Governor from his course, and his designs even grew more ambitious. With a thousand men at his disposal, he suggested that the commander dispossess the French from their fort ; or, should that prove impracticable, a council must determine the location for an English fort, to be garrisoned until spring. He suggested an offensive operation, involving the destruction of the corn near the fort and at Logstown. Such schemes were easily concocted at Williamsburg, but they filled Washington with no

little alarm. From his point of view, and he was entitled to speak by his knowledge of the country and the means at his disposal, to dislodge the enemy from their stronghold was morally impossible. Provisions, ammunition, working-tools, and camp equipages, even the men to use them, must first be obtained, and transported over the mountains, a task out of the question during the winter, and it was now August, or too late to look for any real advance before the cold weather. The disaffection in the Virginia regiment gave little prospect of good service. "Were our men ever so willing to go, for want of the proper necessaries of life they are unable to do it. The chief part are almost naked, and scarcely a man has either shoes, stockings, or hat. These things the merchants will not credit them for. The country has made no provision; they have not money themselves; and it cannot be expected, that the officers will engage for them again, personally, having suffered greatly already on this head; especially, now, when we have all the reason in the world to believe, they will desert whenever they have an opportunity. There is not a man that has a blanket to secure him from cold or wet." Until the arrears of pay had been made good, the officers and men would be deaf to any suggestion of re-enlisting.

The Assembly met in August with good dispositions, and in less than a week of sitting voted £20,000, to be raised by a poll tax. Unfortunately the question of paying the agent of the Burgesses in England, the man who was opposing the Governor in his attempt to collect the fee for land sales, arose and was decided by proposing to pay it out of this war appropriation. The

Governor returned the measure as irregular and prorogued the body to October. Dinwiddie, naturally much chagrined by such a dashing of his hope, wrote home that no expedition could be conducted against the French with dependence on the American Assemblies, and seriously proposed that the colonies be obliged by act of Parliament to obey the commands of his Majesty and defend their property from the insults of the French. Checked in his wishes for an immediate move upon the French, the Governor ordered Washington to detach a part of his small force to protect the frontiers of Augusta county, and to march with the remainder to Will's Creek, there to await orders.

The orders came from England. The ministry, realizing the dangers of a French occupation of the Ohio valley, were desirous of having a spirited campaign. The Governor of Maryland, Horatio Sharpe, was selected for the supreme command, and in consultation with his colleagues of Virginia and North Carolina formed a plan for carrying the French fort before it could be reinforced in the spring, of building a fort on the opposite side of the river, of retaining that on Will's Creek, and possibly of attempting the French forts near Lake Erie. The plan was an extensive one, too extensive to be considered with the means to be had in the colonies. The ministry granted £20,000 sterling, to be reimbursed by the Colony, and sent two thousand stand of arms from the royal stores, both contributions promising to be of high utility in furthering the expedition. The Assembly voted £20,000 Virginia money, but both sums would not go very far towards meeting the demands of Sharpe's plan of campaign.

A determination of the Governor affected the position of Washington. In place of a colonial regiment, Dinwiddie suggested ten companies, each one of whom was to be commanded by a captain, under a royal commission. The reason for taking this step was the wish to silence any differences as to rank between the colonial and the independent companies. The position of colonel, or commander of the Virginia forces, Dinwiddie wished for himself, an ambition that could not smooth over the difficulties of disputed ranks that had produced so much real ill feeling among the Virginia officers. Nor was the Lieutenant-Governor fitted by nature or training to command, and his intense partiality for Innes had contributed much towards making the campaign of 1754 a failure. Washington could not serve under men he had once commanded, an act degrading to his pride, and at once tendered his resignation, showing a sensitiveness that Dinwiddie could not appreciate. His expression of wonder found a response in the controller of the destinies of Pennsylvania. "I am concerned," wrote Thomas Penn, "to find Colonel Washington's conduct so imprudent." The niceties of personal pride and honor did not appeal to those natures.

Colonel Fitzhugh, on whom the details of the approaching military movement fell, was anxious to secure the services of this young, but tried and experienced, soldier. He offered a suggestion by which Washington was to hold the commission of a colonel, without its rank, or emolument, or command, a suggestion that was immediately repelled. "You must entertain a very contemptible opinion of my weakness, and believe me

to be more empty than the commission itself." A sense of injury led him to harbor unworthy suspicion. The orders on the command, by which he was displaced, originated, he thought, among the officers at Will's Creek, jealous of his influence and opportunity. Such a thought was excusable, for appearances could be made to favor it; in reality it had no basis in fact. Nor could it wean Washington from his military ambitions. "My inclinations are strongly bent to arms."

Retiring to Mount Vernon in November, he watched the course of events, hearing frequently from his old command. In addition to the money and arms given by the ministry, a body of troops were sent to Virginia commanded by General Braddock. The mere intelligence that such a force of trained soldiers was coming gave an impetus to the colonial measures, for it promised many advantages. The defense of the frontiers from Indian and French incursions could be entrusted to the provincial forces of militia, imperfectly equipped as they were; but to act offensively and to rid the country of these marauders and trespassers, some more efficient instrument was demanded. This the regulars under Braddock were expected to supply, and the colonists no longer felt dependent upon their own efforts. With the new commander came definite instruction as to rank—the royal commission was to take precedence of the provincial upon every occasion, without any regard to the date of the commission. Had Washington been induced by Fitzhugh to retain his colonelcy, the new orders would have proved the hollowness of the honor, and degraded him below the most recent of the King's officers of the

same rank. The unreality of his position would have become evident in contrast with the stern reality created by a royal signature.

Braddock possessed faults of character, and faults that rendered him unfitted for the service he was about to undertake. Ignorance of the country and the people was not the greatest defect, for that could be overcome in part by the counsel of those who did know this important matter. To this ignorance, no greater than that of his superiors in England, was joined a contempt of the enemy to be encountered. A small body of French, assisted by a few uncivilized and unnecessary natives who had never been able to stand against the discipline and equipments of the regular forces, not even against the crudely constituted armies of the colonies, was nothing to present a serious obstacle to a commander confident of easy success. Even this great trust in his own strength and abilities could be modified by the judicious advice of those who had faced the Indians and met defeat at the hands of the French. The most difficult attitude to overcome was an insolent contempt for his own allies—the regiments and companies raised by the colonies, and the bands of Indians who had thrown their fortunes on the side of the English. No persuasion, no warnings, no threats, could soften this crying fault, one that was shared by commander and royal officers alike. However able and even brilliant Braddock might be in other directions, his offensive treatment and disregard of what might have been the most useful part of his command threatened disaster from the beginning.

Washington at every opportunity urged the necessity

of modifying the methods of advance and attack to meet those employed by the French and Indians. The very nature of the country called for this, for the mountains and covered country did not lend themselves readily to the tactics of the regular army. Discipline and the rule of thumb laid down in the military manuals proved stronger, however, and ruled the policy of the General.

Late in February Braddock landed in Virginia, and soon learned the esteem in which Washington was held, and the reason of his not being in actual service. Nothing in the colonial force could be offered to him without again calling into unpleasant prominence the question of rank, and that would be conclusive against his accepting an appointment. To obviate this difficulty, Braddock asked Washington to join his military family as an aid, a position at once honorable and flattering to the sulking warrior. It offered him an escape from his retirement, and a rank somewhat above that of a volunteer, which he had expressed an inclination to hold. Although an extra aid, he was offered a captain's commission by brevet, and was given the opportunity of naming several ensigncies in the regular regiments. He looked upon it as a favorable opportunity to add to his knowledge of the military profession while serving under a "gentleman of General Braddock's abilities and experience," and determined to accept. Even the fears of his mother and the demands of his estate could not turn him from his purpose. To the Speaker of the Burgesses he frankly gave the reasons for his choice. "In doing it, I may be allowed to claim some merit, if it is considered that the sole motive, which invites me

to the field, is the laudable desire of serving my country, and not the gratification of any ambitious or lucrative plans."

April 23d he set out from Mount Vernon to join the General at Will's Creek. It was not an easy journey under any conditions, and it was made difficult by a series of accidents. "If an old proverb will apply to my case," he wrote to Mrs. Fairfax, "I shall close with success, for no man could have made a worse *beginning* than I have done. Out of 4 horses which I brought from home, one I have killed outright and the other three are rendered unfit for use; so that I have been detained here [Bullskin] for three days already, and how much longer I may continue to be so, time can only discover." Overtaking the General at Frederick Town, they pushed on together, halting at Winchester to await the arrival of the second division of the force. It would then be another stage to Will's Creek, after which the difficulties of crossing the mountains must be faced.

Enough had been encountered by the General to ruffle his temper and act upon that quality of his character which had least utility in the venture. Starting with a prejudice against the provincials, the march gave him cause to suspect their protestations of devoted service. The selection of the route of march had been left to Sir John St. Clair, the Quartermaster-General of the army. To gain despatch he divided the force, sending the powder and ordnance by way of Winchester, and the military and hospital stores by way of Frederick, in Maryland. Braddock with his second, Colonel Dunbar, went by the Maryland route, and was surprised on

reaching Frederick to find no road leading to his destination. St. Clair had looked to the Governor of Pennsylvania to build the road, and sharply asked why it had not been done. Overstepping the bounds of discipline he received a "set-down" from Morris, and was more cautious in hectoring thereafter, however much he felt that less than what was fit had been done. Even Braddock saw the absurdity of the route, and damned it very heartily. He was obliged to cross the river and take the Winchester road, reaching Fort Cumberland on May 10th. Nothing further could be done until horses, wagons, and forage could be made ready.

The appointment of Washington as aid-de-camp had been published in general orders, and promised an agreeable position. He was freed from all commands save those of the General, yet gave his orders to all. The personal relations existing between him and his associates were also pleasant to all, and more easy than he had been led to expect. "I have met with much complaisance in this family, especially from the General, whom I hope to please without ceremonious attentions or difficulty; for, I may add, it can not be done with them, as he uses and requires less ceremony than you can easily conceive." He was able to prove his usefulness to his commander, for he was sent to Williamsburg to bring a large sum of money required by the service, a mission successfully accomplished.

Not so successful was the advance of the army. It is true a communication between Fort Cumberland and the old road was discovered, which obviated the necessity of crossing the high mountain that had proved so destructive to the horses. This brought into prominence

the large number of wagons in the train, and the delay they occasioned. Holding a council of war, it was determined to discard, as far as possible, the wagons, and increase the number of pack-horses; while the officers were requested to send away their baggage, and apply the horses to carry provisions for the army. This they did with great cheerfulness and zeal. In comparison to what was needed, these expedients were of small moment. Deposits of supplies had been promised by the governors, but were found not to have been prepared, or were placed where they could be of no service and no means provided for bringing them to the army. Food sent into the camp was often condemned; no salt could be had in large quantities, and the horses were stolen nearly as fast as they were obtained. Ill feeling was caused among the inhabitants by the extreme measures adopted by the General to make good those defects. He impressed horses and teams, even servants and carriages with their horses. Had it not been for the timely aid of Franklin, who had the gift of organizing and calling out the means at hand, the army might have remained indefinitely where it was, until driven back by want of food.

The patience of the General was exhausted. "For want of that temper and moderation, which should be used by a man of sense upon these occasions, he will, I fear, represent us in a light we little deserve; for, instead of blaming the individuals, as he ought, he charges all his disappointments to publick supineness, and looks upon the country, I believe, as void of honor and honesty. We have frequent disputes on this head," continued Washington, "which are maintained with warmth

on both sides, especially on his, who is incapable of arguing without, or giving up any point he asserts, let it be ever so incompatible with reason or common sense."

In private conference with Washington, whose cool sense and knowledge of the conditions around him were in strong contrast to his own hasty temper and ignorance, Braddock asked for a frank opinion. The reply was to push on, if only with a small chosen band, with as little baggage as possible, leaving the heavy train of stores and artillery to follow. The French were known to be weak, but expecting reinforcements; and at present these could not come by water. Everything promised a fortunate blow, if struck speedily. The advice was followed but only for a time; for "I found that instead of pushing on with vigor, without regarding a little rough road, they were halting to level every mole-hill, and to erect bridges over every brook, by which means we were four days getting twelve miles."

Washington had overtaxed his own strength, and he came down with the fever in so bad a form that he could neither ride a horse, nor endure the jolting of a covered wagon. He was left with a guard to await the coming of Dunbar, now two days' march in the rear. Even this was not extorted from him until Braddock gave his word of honor that he should be brought up before he reached the French fort, a promise of greater efficacy than any pleadings or threats of the doctor. For more than three weeks he was separated from the General, fretting under the restraints of sickness and the petty annoyances of a camp illy provided to meet the conditions even for making any advance. On July 8th he

was sufficiently recovered to join the advanced corps, making the journey in a covered wagon; and on the next day he attended Braddock on horseback, albeit using cushions to break the jar of movement. He had his wish, for he was present in the hour of danger.

The opinion is general that Braddock was surprised. His army of nearly thirteen hundred men, chiefly regulars, was crossing the Monongahela for the second time, to avoid an ugly defile. Suddenly the whooping and hallooing of the enemy broke upon their astonished ears, and the unaccustomed sound struck terror in their hearts. The van halted, and the rear pushed forward upon them, but no enemy was visible. A galling fire poured into their solid ranks, which wavered, and soon broke into a panic that no officers could control. The few Virginians in the front, true to their instincts, scattered and advanced to the attack; but found their action was discountenanced as evidencing cowardice. Washington offered to head the provincials and engage the enemy in their own way, but received no encouragement. The officers fought nobly, and even Braddock sought by example to show what bravery could accomplish, receiving the fatal wound that forced him from the field. His two aids, Orme and Morris, were severely wounded, and Washington was left the only leader to direct the destinies of the unequal contest. In the confusion no one knew who was the commander, and each man fought for himself.

Washington succeeded in placing the wounded General in a small covered cart, and took him over the Monongahela, where some attempt to re-form the now disorganized forces was made. It was seen that all the

leading officers were missing, having suffered for their incomparable bravery; and Washington could tell of one horse killed and two wounded under him, a ball through his hat and several through his clothes. Yet he was unhurt. Having done all that was possible under the circumstances, he went after sundown to meet the second division under Colonel Dunbar, to make arrangements for covering the retreat and providing supplies for the sick and wounded. Riding the whole night and part of the next day, he covered forty miles, and accomplished his purpose. Sick and weary as he was, he could not return, and awaited the arrival of the cavalcade that told so eloquently of a crushing defeat. "The shocking scenes which presented themselves in this night's march are not to be described—the dead—the dying—the groans—lamentations and crys along the road of the wounded for help (for those under the latter descriptions endeavored from the first commencement of the action or rather confusion to escape to ye second division) were enough to pierce the heart of adamant." The night was so dark that the guides were obliged to grope on the ground with their hands to find the way. Fortunately the Indians were too intent upon plundering what had been left on the battlefield to pursue, or a general massacre might have been the result. As it was, more than two thirds of the English forces was killed or missing, and the loss of officers was particularly large.

The regulars blamed the provincials for the defeat, saying that they were harassed by duties unequal to their numbers, and dispirited through want of provisions. They claimed to have been disheartened by the repeated

suggestions of a defeat because of the impossibility of meeting an attack of Indians by tactics employed in European armies. Washington denounced the dastardly conduct of the regulars, and believed that two thirds of the loss was due to shots from "our own cowardly regulars, who gathered themselves into a body, contrary to orders, ten or twelve deep, would then level, fire, and shoot down the men before them." The officers he praised, for the heavy losses among them proved their devoted sacrifice. The Virginia companies behaved like men and died like soldiers—scarce thirty remaining alive out of the three companies.

Gathering the remnants of the army a retreat towards Fort Cumberland was begun. Near the Great Meadows Braddock breathed his last and was interred with the honors of war. The body was buried in the road, and the passage of army wagons and marching men over it obliterated every mark—a necessary precaution to prevent the Indians from insulting it. Washington in later years summarized Braddock's character. "Thus died a man whose good and bad qualities were intimately blended. He was brave even to a fault, and in regular service would have done honor to his profession. His attachments were warm—his enmities were strong—and having no disguise about him, both appeared in full force. He was generous and disinterested—but plain and blunt in his manner even to rudeness." The opinion was just and not unfriendly.

Dunbar, on whom the command had fallen, determined to go to Philadelphia with such of the regulars as remained. In vain did the Governor of Virginia plead the exposed condition of the Virginia back country.

Fearful of an unpursuing foe, he destroyed ammunition and provisions, and on the plea of winter quarters sought the safe shelter of Philadelphia. The one man who came out of this crushing defeat with honor, was Washington, and the heavy losses of the Virginia companies proved how well they had supported him.

CHAPTER V

THE FRONTIERS

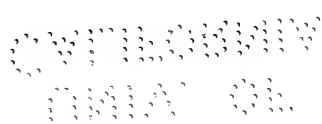
GREATLY weakened by his illness, and excited by the unfortunate issue of the campaign, Washington made his way slowly from Fort Cumberland to Mount Vernon. Whatever despondency he had endured after the capitulation at Fort Necessity was deepened by his chagrin and disappointment at the total miscarriage of Braddock's expedition. Then it was a small body of provincial troops, on ill terms with one another, poorly equipped, and unprepared for a regular movement either of offense or defense. Now it was a finely disciplined and fully equipped body of regulars, led by a man whose pride was his greatest fault, and surprised by tactics as appalling in results as they were novel. The defeat was crushing. There was no pretense of making a stand; Dunbar was hastening to Philadelphia with what was left of the British force, and a small garrison held watch on Will's Creek, incapable of annoying the enemy, and helpless should he attack. Surely the exposed condition of the frontiers was to be anxiously considered, and every effort made to make them defensible.

This was Washington's task. As adjutant of the northern division his duty was to call out the militia, and he at once issued a summons. In each county of his division the men were to assemble on a certain day, properly equipped, and he intended to review them. Under the stress of threatened invasion the men came forward willingly and with ardor. They were reviewed, and after the custom of the day, listened to a sermon or address on the duties of man, in which the speaker did not fail to draw a fruitful lesson from the recent events. In Hanover County, where the response to the call of danger was quick and full, the Reverend Samuel Davies preached to the company, taking for his subject, "Religion and Patriotism the Constituents of a Good Soldier." His object was to encourage the men now taking to arms in defense of their homes; but he was touched with the gift of prophecy. "I may point out to the public that heroic youth, Colonel Washington, whom I cannot but hope Providence has hitherto preserved in so signal a manner for some important service to his country." A chance sentence, that has made the name of Davies known as it never could have been known by other utterance of his.

The performance of his public duty began to awaken the ambitious desires of Washington. His half-brother, a member of the Assembly, sounded him as to his wishes, and called out the reply, "I am so little dispirited at what has happened, that I am always ready and always willing, to render my country any services that I am capable of, but never upon the terms I have done; having suffered much in my private fortune, besides impairing one of the best constitutions." It was only just to secure

himself against further loss and suffering should he again serve, though gain did not enter into his expectations. One voice he must listen to—that of his mother. "If it is in my power," he wrote to her in answer to a plea not to serve, "to avoid going to the Ohio again, I shall; but if the command is pressed upon me, by the general voice of the country, and offered upon such terms as cannot be objected against, it would reflect dishonor upon me to refuse; and that, I am sure, must or ought to give you greater uneasiness, than my going in an honorable command, for upon no other terms I will accept of it."

The Assembly voted twelve hundred men, and was favorable to increasing the forces of the colony to four thousand. Washington did not go to the capital, where his presence might be interpreted as a push for the command. The Governor, when his name was mentioned, seemed favorable to him, although another applicant was urging his own claims to the appointment. A few days determined the question, and on August 14, 1755, the commission of George Washington as commander in chief of the Virginia forces was signed. In explaining the appointment to his superiors Dinwiddie said he believed Washington to be a man of great merit and resolution. "Our officers are greatly dispirited for want of his Majesty's commissions, that when they join the regulars they may have some rank; and I am persuaded it would be of infinite service if his Majesty would graciously please to honor them with his commissions, the same as General Shirley's and Sir William Pepperell's regiments; and I am convinced, if General Braddock had survived, he would have recommended Mr. Washington to the royal favor."



At the age of twenty-three Washington thus held the highest military position in the gift of the Governor. No further honor could come to him save direct from the King, the fountain of all honor. He took his commission modestly, deprecating the confidence of his friends, and warning them they might be deceived. "I am unequal to the task, and do assure you, that it requires more experience than I am master of, to conduct an affair of the importance that this is now arisen to." He was wise in his diffidence, for the experience already had pointed out some serious defects in the organization of the colonial forces. Why should he be obliged to receive officers appointed without his advice and concurrence? He was answerable for their behavior in camp and on the field, and his success was in a measure dependent upon their conduct and loyal support. In the species of warfare he was planning, where the forces were often dispersed, the officers had every opportunity to misbehave. With Braddock's example so fresh in his mind, he sees the injustice of the world's comments. "How little credit is given to a commander, who, after a defeat, in relating the cause of it, justly lays the blame on some individual, whose cowardly behavior betrayed the whole to ruin! How little does the world consider the circumstances, and how apt are mankind to level their vindictive censures against the unfortunate chief, who perhaps merited least of the blame!"

Another lesson he had taken to heart—the necessity of a strict performance of a promise or contract. The difficulties attending any campaign across the mountains were undeniably great. The mere question of transporting ordnance, ammunition, and provisions was in

itself sufficient to tax the ingenuity of a trained commissary. The difficulties had been unduly aggravated by the inadequate means for meeting them, a want of money, of properly fitted men, and a deplorable absence of teams and horses. The contractors failed to deliver the goods, the teamsters found it impossible to transport such as were delivered to the place where they were most required, and the promises of government were not strictly observed. The mischief was not one for a moment, but would last for years. It would still be active in the approaching campaign. Wagoners who had received little pay for their exertions in the past, and no compensation for their lost horses and wagons, would not willingly again come forward. Deprived of the necessary machinery of transportation, delays would be long, unduly multiplied, even enforced so as to produce a full stoppage. "I am fully sensible, whoever undertakes this command will meet with such insurmountable obstacles, that he will soon be viewed in the light of an idle, indolent body, have his conduct criticised, and meet perhaps with opprobrious abuse, when it may be as much out of his power to avoid delays, as it would be to command the raging seas in a storm." The sense of responsibility had been greatly developed since his venturesome journey to the French fort in the winter of 1753–'54.

Everything was to be done. The commissary was reluctant to enter into new engagements before he had been satisfied for the old contracts. There was an abundance of provisions, intended for Braddock's army, too great a supply for the Virginians alone. He proposed to send them to the West Indies, there to be

exchanged for rum, an article that was a good medium of exchange anywhere in the back country, readily buying flour, pork, or clothing. Supplies of shoes, stockings, shirts, and hats were taken wherever offered at fair prices, and in these petty but necessary details of recruiting and equipping the new army Washington expended his energies. He consulted with Dinwiddie at Williamsburg; went to Alexandria to direct the collection of stores; rode to Fort Cumberland to assume command, and penetrated as far as Fort Dinwiddie on Jackson's River. Satisfying himself as to the condition of these works, he returned to Alexandria, again visited the Governor, and shortly after was met by an express giving information of an incursion of the Indians, with the usual accompaniments of murder and destruction of property. With troops not only deficient in numbers but wanting in the necessaries of a campaign, often disobedient and on the point of mutiny, Washington faced the difficulties of defending the back settlements.

On reaching Winchester evidence of the trouble met him. The people from the backwoods were flocking into the town, while those of the town were moving out, fearing an attack. Everything was hurry and confusion, and no man would join the militia, preferring, as they said, to die with their wives and families. Wagons were impressed to go for flour, ammunition, and supplies; gunsmiths were almost forced to remain and do what was expected of them. "In all things I meet with the greatest opposition. No orders are obeyed, but what a party of soldiers, or my own drawn sword, enforces; without this a single horse, for the most urgent occasion,

cannot be had, to such a pitch has the insolence of these people arrived, by having every point hitherto submitted to them. However, I have given up none, where his Majesty's service requires the contrary, and where my proceedings are justified by my instructions; nor will I do it, unless they execute what they threaten, *i. e.* 'to blow out my brains.'"

The fear of the people was exaggerated, but in their excited condition it required but little to start a rumor which rapidly swelled into a detailed account of an incursion, death, and advancing hordes of savages. One such flurry was investigated by Washington to determine its truth. An express, spent with fear and fatigue, came into camp at night, bringing word of a party of Indians some twelve miles away, driving the inhabitants before them. The guards of the camp were doubled, scouts were sent out to determine the position of the marauders, and all night the men lay on their arms. In the morning came a second express, ten times more terrified than the first, telling of Indians within four miles of the town, killing and destroying all before them, for he himself had heard constant firing, and shrieks of the unhappy murdered! Hastily gathering a small force, Washington went to the scene of carnage, and found three drunken soldiers, carousing, firing their pistols, and uttering the most unheard-of imprecations. As to the first reported party of Indians, the scouts returned and told of a mulatto and negro, seen hunting their cattle by a child, who alarmed his father, and the father aroused the neighborhood. That such incidents should produce the results that were produced, proved the panic prevailing among the people. Crowds were

reported as flying over the mountains to seek the shelter of the settlements, and no arguments could restrain them. The truth was that the Indians making the first alarm had turned back, and not even their tracks could be found. The proper course to pursue was for the inhabitants to return to their homes and care for their crops. This Washington advised them to do, and in a few days the terror had subsided.

An old difficulty now presented itself in a new face —the question of rank under the different commissions. By the defeat of Braddock Maryland was aroused into some activity, and a company of men was raised and stationed at Fort Cumberland. One Captain John Dagworthy was in command, having some military repute from serving at the head of a Jersey company in the Canada expedition. Since that time he had resided on an estate of his own in Maryland, and for some reason was selected by Governor Sharpe to lead the provincial force, such as it was. Innes, now known as Governor, was really the commander of Fort Cumberland, but had been called to North Carolina by his private affairs. Dagworthy claimed to succeed him, refused to obey the orders of any other colonial officers, and was supported indirectly by Sharpe's refusing to give decisive directions in the matter. The fort, he claimed, was on Maryland territory, and was therefore subject to his jurisdiction. Dinwiddie, on the other hand, held that it was a King's fort, built by order of the King, and chiefly by forces in the pay of the King. No one colony could claim it for its own. Further, as Captain Dagworthy had commuted his half-pay for a specific sum of money, his original commission was

obsolete, and he could not pretend to act under it. As a captain of thirty men, holding a commission from the Governor of Maryland, he could hardly claim precedence of the commander in chief of all the Virginia forces.

The question, so petty in appearance, involved important principles. The inferior officers naturally took sides, and united action or harmony of orders was out of the question. Washington proposed to move the fort so as to bring it into Virginia; that would be advisable under any conditions. He then urged Dinwiddie to lay the question of rank and command before Governor Shirley, now the arbiter of military matters in America. "I can never submit," he said, "to the command of Captain Dagworthy." What made it the more galling was that the Marylander supported his men on the provisions supplied by the Virginians. The latter now wished to urge Shirley to put them upon the regular establishment, a proposition sensible in itself and capable of ending all contention. They further wished Washington to appear personally before the General to plead their cause. This he was willing to do, as it would enable him to learn the plans of those directing them, and how far the co-operation of the other colonies could be counted upon. He asked leave of Dinwiddie to go to Boston, and received a favorable reply. In the meanwhile a meeting of governors, held at New York, at which Virginia was not represented, laid out a plan of operations for the spring.

Leaving Alexandria in February, 1756, Washington made his way on horseback towards Boston, stopping at the different towns on his route, and meeting those who were ruling the policies of the colonies. His reputation

gained under Braddock was sufficient to open all doors to him, and his definite views of what course should be pursued made him a welcome adviser. Separated as the colonies were in every respect, he could give at least one common issue, the advance of the French, and point out the great importance of the fort on the Ohio in establishing the claims of England to the western country. It was not so much the social experience of the young soldier that gave this journey its importance; it was the political connections formed, and the opportunity to show how well he had mastered the leading points of western policy. After an absence of six weeks he was again at Williamsburg, armed with a letter from Shirley recognizing his claim to rank.

Though successful on the main point, Washington returned to Virginia fully resolved to resign his commission. Governor Sharpe had become convinced that it was only just to recognize the claims of the Virginian, and had written to Shirley asking that he make him second in command. "As Mr. Washington is much esteemed in Virginia, and really seems a gentleman of merit, I should be exceedingly glad to learn that your Excellency is not averse to favoring his application and request." With Sharpe in his favor, and Shirley ready to recognize his claims, it would seem as if his position could not be stronger or more satisfactory. Circumstances obliged him to remain in service, for an outbreak of the Indians threatened to drive the settlers into the towns.

The general determination of operations did not define what particular acts the Colony should perform, and Washington offered two policies, one of which must

be followed. He must either prepare to take the field in the spring, or confine his thoughts to guarding the frontiers only. In the one case he must be ready to take the initiative and act on the offensive; in the other he would be passive until attacked. His small force had given him no choice, and a number of forts along a stretch of one hundred miles of frontiers were built. Pennsylvania had adopted the same policy of defense, and the Virginia Assembly formally came into the measure by voting to erect a chain of forts along the entire western limits of settlements. The provincial force was to be raised to two thousand men.

Not only was the service hard but the pay was small. In the default of proper recruiting laws, bodies of militia were called out, who were slow in coming forward and were discharged after the camp discipline had begun to make them soldiers. In the absence of a full military law the commanding officer was unable to exercise the control over officers and men which was essential to maintain a high standard of quality. The trouble was inherent in the methods of obtaining men. They were enlisted when drunk, and servants and apprentices were taken in defiance of law. Recruiting agents seized, imprisoned, and tortured men to force them to be enrolled. At election times officers stood at the polling places to induce recruits to sign. No selection was exercised, and boys were accepted as readily as men.

Gathered in this way the men proved refractory when subjected to camp discipline. The officers were inattentive to their duties, and the soldiers grew insolent. The adoption of a military law modelled after

that of Great Britain did not entirely remove all difficulties. Desertions were frequent, and the guilty were sheltered and entertained by the people. Yet the punishment of desertion was death. "Any soldier who shall desert" ran the orders, "though he return again, shall be hanged without mercy." A defect in the power would not permit Washington to mete out this full penalty, so he was obliged to "whip stoutly" any who should desert and be retaken. When the proper power was conferred he did not hesitate to hang. He relates to the Governor his enjoying an escort of thirty men, chiefly officers, along the range of forts on Jackson's River. "With this small company of irregulars, with whom order, regularity, circumspection, and vigilance were matters of derision and contempt, we set out, and, by the protection of Providence, reached Augusta Court House in seven days, without meeting the enemy; otherwise we must have fallen a sacrifice, through the indiscretion of these whooping, hallooing gentlemen soldiers!" If such was the quality of the officers, what could be expected of the men?

War was declared against France by the King on May 17th, 1756. Early in August the fact became known in Virginia, and Washington, now at Winchester, was obliged to inquire what ceremony should be observed in making the declaration locally. Dinwiddie instructed him to declare war at the head of his companies, "with three volleys of small arms for his Majesty's health and a successful war." As the operations in America would occur in more than one of the colonies, the ministry named the general. In the light of subsequent events the announcement of the

choice was in sarcastic terms. "The events of the ensuing campaign," wrote Dunk Halifax to the governors, "in which the interest, honour, and safety of his Majesty's American Dominions are so deeply concerned are in the hands of Providence; but his Majesty as far as he has been able to provide for the success of arms by the choice of a general seems to have done it in the appointment of the Earl of Loudoun." To General Abercrombie Dinwiddie recommended Washington in high terms of praise. "He is a person much beloved here, and he has gone through many hardships in the service, and I really think he has great merit, and believe he can raise more men here, than any one present that I know. If his Lordship will be so kind as to promote him in the British establishment, I think he will answer my recommendation."

Washington's relations with the Lieutenant-Governor were not entirely smooth. Patience was not one of the strong elements of Dinwiddie's character, and it had been sorely tried by the events of two years. Standing alone in his efforts to drive out the French, he had felt the half-hearted measures of colonies having an equal interest in the campaigns, or the total abstention of those whose interests were concerned if only indirectly. With an Assembly that was in opposition, with inefficient subordinates, and with many disappointments in men and things, for which he was held accountable, he became sensitive to criticism, and irritable under it.

The experience of Washington on the frontiers had given him a poor opinion of Fort Cumberland. It was too remote to be of any service in protecting the

people, as he learned after a visit to the place. It could not properly form one of the chain of forts, and yet required a force of size as a garrison. The works were unfinished and not strongly built, and were "not capable of an hour's defense, if the enemy were to bring only one single half-pounder against it; which they might do with great ease on horseback." When the council had considered these objections, they believed the keeping of the fort was an unnecessary expense; but Dinwiddie would entertain no proposal to abandon it, showing much warmth in the matter. He wrote to Washington that Fort Cumberland was a King's fort, and built chiefly at the expense of the Colony; therefore properly under his direction until another commander was appointed. Such an answer, given in a somewhat petulant manner, could not silence the complaints or arguments of Washington. He was on the spot, had measured the strength of the fort and the temper of his men, and was pressed on all sides by calls for help from places exposed to attack and depending upon him for safety. He again urged the abandonment of Fort Cumberland, and Dinwiddie yielded so far as to permit him to call a council of his officers to consider the question. It had become more a question of maintaining a number of small and weak garrisons on the frontier, or concentrating larger bodies of men in the more exposed places, whence they could move more freely and with greater safety as occasion called for. Under the former policy an ineffective campaign of defense would follow; while Washington wished for an offensive movement, and believed it necessary. "Carrying the war into the enemy's country is the surest method of peace at home

and success abroad." The friendship of the Indians depended upon the defeat and dislodging of the French.

The Governor received the results of the deliberations of the officers, submitted them to his council, and ordered Washington to abandon the stockade forts on the Branch, to send from Winchester one hundred men to Fort Cumberland, to proceed to that place himself, and, remaining there, to make it as strong against an attack as was possible. Colonel Washington felt the tone of the order and the chill of the letter in which it was conveyed. "Am sorry to find that this, and my best endeavors of late, meet with unfavorable constructions. What it proceeds from, I know not. If my open and disinterested way of writing and speaking has the air of pertness and freedom, I shall correct my error by acting reservedly, and shall take care to obey my orders without offering any thing more."

The winter was passed in this petty business of the forts, and on the approach of spring Washington determined to avail himself of the presence of Lord Loudoun in Virginia to urge his policy. In spite of spending eight months in doing no essential service to the country, or gaining honor or reputation for the regiment, much had been accomplished. The Virginia force, dispersed over the country, and acting on the defensive, had been engaged in upwards of twenty skirmishes, and had lost in killed and wounded near a hundred men. In other colonies it had been the settlers who had suffered the heaviest losses; in Virginia it was the regiment, and the settlers had enjoyed as high a degree of protection as was under the circumstances possible. "This, I conceive, will not appear inconsiderable to

those, who are in the least degree acquainted with the nature of this service, and the posture of our affairs; however it may seem to chimney-corner politicians, who are thirsting for news, and expecting by every express to hear in what manner Fort Duquesne was taken, and the garrison led away captive by our small numbers; altho' we are restrained from making the attempt, were our hopes of success ever so rational!"

The long list of matters requiring attention was only a summary of what he had urged upon the executive of the Colony. The chief items of the list have already been given; for himself he asked proper recognition. As it was he bore the blame for all reverses, although he was subject to ambiguous orders, was given no privilege of defending himself, and had long been satisfied that to continue in a service which promised so little of a soldier's reward, would involve a loss of honor. He had been led to expect a better establishment. Braddock had promised him all he desired, "and I believe that gentleman was too sincere and generous to make unmeaning offers, when no favors were asked." General Shirley had also made promises, and the Virginia legislature had first solicited the Lieutenant-Governor to address the King, and again had themselves addressed his Majesty in favor of the regiment. Loudoun asked the governors of the southern colonies to meet him in Philadelphia, and Dinwiddie, somewhat sulkily, gave Washington permission to attend. In one respect this council did not meet the expectations of Virginia. It was found that Loudoun's instructions called for a northern campaign, and further the principal defense of the southern colonies would be made from South

Carolina, a part of the Virginia levies being ordered to that province. Thus Virginia was called upon not only to raise troops for its own protection, but to provide men for Carolina. Fort Cumberland was recognized as a Maryland fort, and the Virginians were to retire to Fort Loudoun, where, accordingly, Washington, in April, made his headquarters.

The little friction between the Governor and the Colonel increased, though it must be admitted it was due more to Washington than to Dinwiddie. Where a slight is conceived, it is not difficult to look upon many harmless incidents as intentional injuries. Washington had cause to believe that the Governor would be really pleased to hear that he was in trouble. There was no lack of criticism of the force on the frontier. For some time rumors of drunkenness, immoralities, and offenses against discipline were common, and included officers as well as men. Vague at first, the details of misconduct became more definite, and finally took the form of newspaper controversy. One attack, made by "Centinel X," was thought of such moment that Washington wrote a reply, and his friends took up the pen in his behalf. In truth there was little or no personal feeling against Washington on the part of the Governor. He was criticised so much for the heavy expenses of the military establishment, that he had become sensitive, and ready to cut down expenses where an opening was offered. His readiness to issue orders and proffer advice was resented by Washington, whose superior officer was Colonel Stanwix, now in command of the middle and southern provinces. The Governor persisted in maintaining a general direction, issuing commands at

variance with those of Stanwix, and naturally involving in perplexity those to whom they were directed. A certain deficiency in tact was thus developed, and Dinwiddie was made to appear ungracious to a degree he did not deserve. When, in his doubt, Washington applied to both for leave to attend to a matter connected with the will of his brother, Dinwiddie said no, "your absence on that account from Fort Loudoun must be suspended, till our affairs give a better prospect." Colonel Stanwix was better equipped for commanding the good will of his officers. "I expressed my concern that you should think such a thing necessary to mention to me, as I am sure you could not be out of call, should the service require your immediate attendance; and I hope you will always take that liberty upon yourself, which I hope you will now do."

Petty matters and passing comments became big under the eye of suspicion, and Washington saw in every line a judgment on his conduct. He believed his best endeavors lost their reward; that reproof was given where no reproof was due; that words were applied to discredit his acts. He resented the use of the terms "loose behavior" and "remissness of duties" employed in one of Dinwiddie's letters; and not content with defending himself from written insinuations, he took up the silly charges circulating at Williamsburg, that he had deliberately exaggerated the Indian raids in order to increase his own importance, and secure men and money from the Assembly. This conduct gave the Governor an opportunity to be plain with him. "I 'd advise you not to give credit to every idle story you hear; for if I was to notice reports of different kinds, I should be constantly

perplexed. My conduct to you from the beginning was always friendly; but you know I had great reason to suspect you of ingratitude, which I am convinced your own conscience and reflection must allow, I had reason to be angry, but this endeavor to forget . . . As I have his Majesty's leave to go for England, I propose leaving this in November, and I wish my successor may show you as much friendship as I have done."

The truth was that Washington was a sick man, and worried by the anxieties of a long and harassing service on the frontiers, smarting under a sense of neglect and criticism, his health broke down, and he was obliged to retire to Mount Vernon, where dysentery and fever brought him so low that four months passed before he could resume his duties.

CHAPTER VI

FORT DU QUESNE

EVERY one admitted that Loudoun had been a failure, and welcomed a change in leaders. Colonel John Forbes, acting under Abercromby, was directed to take command of an expedition against Fort Du Quesne, and with every promise of success. Washington, now recovered from his illness, asked Colonel Stanwix to mention him in honorable terms to the new leader, "not as a person who would depend upon him for further recommendation to military preferment, for I have long conquered all such inclinations (and serve this campaign merely for the purpose of affording my best endeavors to bring matters to a conclusion), but as a person who would gladly be distinguished in some measure from the *common run* of provincial officers, as I understand there will be a motley herd of us."

The new appointments instilled activity into the operations, and Sir John St. Clair was sent to Virginia to make preparations for an early movement. There was no governor or lieutenant-governor, and the executive office was filled by John Blair, the President of the

Council, a warm friend of Washington. It was only right that the details should be turned over to the Colonel of the regiment, who soon felt that firmer heads were directing the campaign, heads that knew what was most needed. All kinds of field equipages were required, and the officers must be placed in a condition to take the field, for which special allowances must be made. The ill feeling prevailing in the regiments must be allayed. It appeared that bounties were offered to the second regiment, which was enlisted till December only, while the first regiment, Washington's, received none, although it had already seen long and arduous service and was enlisted for the war. Nor had they received any clothing for two years, though they had a right to an annual supply. The regiment must be completed, but in what manner, drafts or voluntary enlistments? Fort Loudoun was still in an unfinished state, and even when done, must be stocked with supplies and ammunition. It was a change in the attitude of the English ministry that gave a fillip to the exertions of the colonies. It was stipulated that arms, ammunition, tents, and provisions should be supplied to all provincial troops, in the same manner as to the regular forces, and at the King's expense. Thus a good load of cost was lifted from the colonies, as they now provided only for levying, clothing, and paying the men. The troublesome question of rank was determined once for all, and in a manner that could easily have been adopted three years earlier. The governors were authorized to commission officers from colonels downwards, and these commissions were to enjoy equal rank with those issued by the King.

The intercourse between Washington and his superior officers was at once free and confidential. He possessed valuable experience and a thorough knowledge of the conditions to be met, the conditions necessary to success. Both Forbes and Bouquet were receptive of suggestion and eager to avail themselves of whatever was at hand to advance their purpose. The obstacles that blinded poor Braddock, and induced his ruin with that of his army, were no longer present; and the correspondence on both sides proves the estimate in which the opinion of Washington was held, and the confidence with which he advised his commander on matters small as well as great.

His regiment was short of clothing, and there was no prospect of getting as large a stock as was needed. Instead of repining, and remaining inactive until the wants had been met, Washington proposed to put both men and officers in Indian dress, and to set the example by adopting it himself. "Nothing but the uncertainty of its taking with the General," he wrote to Bouquet, "causes me to hesitate a moment at leaving my regimentals at this place, and proceeding as light as any Indian in the woods. 'T is an unbecoming dress, I confess, for an officer; but convenience, rather than show, I think, should be consulted." Bouquet was enough of a leader to recognize the advantage of the suggestion, and gave it his endorsement. It was a lighter dress, more suited to the woods, less liable to wear, and necessary where horses were few in number and burdened with transport. "I am sensible that I have lessened the appearance of the First Virginia regiment; but I beg the General to think that I have rendered them more fit for

the active service they are intended to be engaged in." Even the men smiled at the effect, and Stephen called it an undress rather than a dress; but Bouquet was quick to see its merits, and complimented Washington on the extraordinary despatch with which the plan had been carried into effect, and admitted that the dress should be the pattern for the whole expedition. "The dress takes very well here," he wrote, "and, thank God, we see nothing but shirts and blankets."

A more serious matter, and one in which Bouquet was not expert, was the employment of Indians. Since Braddock's defeat the relations between the natives and the English had not been satisfactory, and even the appointment of special agents did not produce the expected results. The object lay rather in the purpose and nature of the Indians, who had been much altered by their contact with the whites, and not for the better. The traders and common interpreters through whom trade and intercourse were conducted, were for the most part a villainous lot, and they played upon the interest of the Indian, but for their own gain. Promises solemnly made were denied and never performed; treaties entered into with all the formality dear to the Indian's heart were broken and set aside as so much waste paper; the land and the furs of the natives were welcome at a price, but no rights of theirs were held as sacred or as valid against the selfish greed of the settler or trader. The French had learned that through gifts they could hold the allegiance of the Indians for a time, and presents annually made were favorable to treaty relations of peace and even support against a common foe. The English had promised gifts but failed to send them, and met the

complaints of broken faith with a stolid indifference of the effect on the Indian.

Washington urged upon Stanwix the importance of retaining the services of such Indians as were friendly; on their assistance depended greatly the security of the march. More than five hundred were now gathered, and more were daily expected. They were weary with long waiting, and thoroughly sensible of their own importance, were easily offended. To march through the woods and to meet hostile Indians without their aid would be dangerous. Success did not depend so much upon numbers as upon possessing the proper instruments; and a marching army could be easily harassed by a skulking foe, unless flanked by those able to cope with such an enemy. Mercenary the natives were; but it was through this quality they could be approached and made faithful. An early campaign and plenty of goods would make them allies.

Military matters were not the only subjects engaging Washington's attention. His brother's service in the Burgesses naturally pointed to George as his successor. There was sufficient regard for family and property in Virginia to give the office of representative to certain names, almost handing it down from father to son. While the executive offices, and even admittance to the governor's council, were bought and sold (an English custom long acclimated in the southern colonies in America), the seat in the Burgesses went by favor and election. For some years Washington had looked forward to taking a place at the polls, and, it is believed, he was set aside more than once, for an older and more popular candidate. However that may be, in 1758, he determined

to make a political campaign, and rather rashly decided against putting in a personal appearance. By proxy his name was presented, and by proxy the canvass was made. Colonel James Wood, a man of great popularity, went through the forms in his behalf, being carried around the town of Winchester in the midst of much huzzaing for George Washington. A barbacue, and dances, both described as dull affairs, and much drinking in honor of the would-be legislator, were inseparable adjuncts to determining the popular will. Punch by the barrel and hogshead, plenty of wine, brandy, rum, and strong beer, assisted the voters to see special merits in one of the candidates, and Washington's bill for this instruction in the use of the ballot was a heavy one. He came out at the top of the poll, even receiving a larger number of votes than were cast for Colonel Martin, a nephew of Lord Fairfax.

Another question occupied the attention of the soldier-politician. Where and how he met Martha Custis has not been ascertained, and fortunately history has drawn a fitting veil over the scenes and incidents of his winning a bride. A widow, of some pretensions to beauty and reputed to be rich in her own right, she was yet of plain origin, and possessed only the light accomplishments which were then given to women. Exercising strong sense and homely qualities, devoted to household matters and careful in her management of what came within a wife's calling, she was eminently fitted to rule over Mount Vernon. Tradition has been active in throwing round her an atmosphere of culture, breeding, and remarkable qualities. It was the homely qualities that should commend her, the reserve and repression of

self that made her equal to the requirements of plantation, camp, and president's home. One glimpse of the first days of the engagement has survived in a letter from the young soldier:

"We have begun our march for the Ohio. A courier is starting for Williamsburg, and I embrace the opportunity to send a few words to one whose life is now inseparable from mine. Since that happy hour when we made our pledges to each other, my thoughts have been continually going to you as another Self. That an all-powerful Providence may keep us both in safety is the prayer of your ever faithful and affectionate friend."

In July the preparations were so far completed that an advance could be made. The news of the capture of Louisburg came at this time as an inspiring call for action, and Washington wished to be among those first ordered forward. "If there needs any argument to obtain this favor, I hope without vanity I may be allowed to say, that, from long intimacy and scouting in these woods, my men are as well acquainted with all the passes and difficulties, as any troops that will be employed, and therefore may answer any purpose intended by them, as well as any other body." The brief note to Mrs. Custis, one of the very few to his wife that have escaped destruction, gave notice of the march, and the young but tried soldier turned to master the difficulties of his path.

In truth there were serious difficulties to be encountered, and the greatest were not material but political. The most direct route to Fort Du Quesne from Virginia was along the road built by the ill-fated Braddock, and known as Braddock's road. It was the only road fitted for transportation by pack-horses, and was for this, among

other reasons, strongly urged by Washington. Bouquet on the other hand favored the route that was to be opened from Rays Town, although much time would be occupied in making it passable, and much injury done to the horses. The mere proposition to adopt that course filled Washington with dismay. The season was already far advanced, and no time could be needlessly wasted without being severely felt during the late operations. "Backwardness appears in all things," he wrote in a desponding mood, "but the approach of winter—that joggs on apace." Some time in July Bouquet and Washington came together, and exchanged opinions on this important question. Neither convinced the other of his error, and early in August Washington carefully committed to paper the reasons for his belief in the Braddock road.

When the trade with the Indians on the Ohio first became of importance, a good road was sought by Virginia and Pennsylvania. The Indians themselves were consulted, and masters as they were of the western country, knowing all its passes, mountains, and streams, they were of one mind in preferring the track from Will's Creek above all others. To such an extent was this opinion verified by experience that even the Pennsylvanians traded by this route, though apparently so far out of a direct road. When the Ohio company established its station on Will's Creek, a road was opened, and Washington used it in 1754 when going to Gist's plantation, just before the affair of Fort Necessity. Under Braddock it was widened and completed within six miles of the French fort. It had thus stood the test of service and was presumably in a better condition for use than any new road that could be built. The one objection

that could be urged against it was the waters to be passed; but Washington was able to speak of his own experience, and characterized the objection as trivial, and really not worth mentioning. The Monongahela, the largest of the rivers, could be avoided, if necessary, by passing a defile. In distance, there was a little advantage with the Rays Town route, but this was not to be considered when the respective conditions of the two roads were compared, as that of Braddock's was far better. Forage too was more certain on the Meadows than elsewhere, and this was a most important consideration, as all transport was by horses, and was difficult under any conditions.

The plan of Washington involved quick advance along the road, and the stealing a march on the fort—if that were possible. In thirty-four days from the time of leaving Fort Cumberland, the advanced body of troops would be investing Du Quesne, and there would be ample provision in suitable places of deposit along the route, to give every support and assistance, or to give a shelter in case of disaster. Could a rapid march be made an engagement in the woods might be obviated, and that was above all things to be avoided. By way of Rays Town no dash could be made, no surprise could be possible. Every inch of road would have to be cut, and winter would find them still far from their object. Delays would cripple the southern colonies, for they had staked all on the present campaign, and would be too exhausted to repeat their efforts another year. The southern Indians would be alienated and turn against the inhabitants of the Carolinas. Smallpox was already appearing among the troops, and the thought of making

a new road of one hundred miles, over mountains almost inaccessible, seemed to stamp the expedition with failure.

Back of this question of the road was not a little politics. Loudoun had received from Pennsylvania so flattering a picture of the advantages of its own position as to induce him to favor an advance by that province, should one be ordered. Sir John St. Clair was the one directly responsible for the new road, which was no longer than the old, and was certainly easier. There is no evidence of any undue influence in determining this question, though it is certain the passage of an army, with its stores and equipments, would greatly benefit the colony through which the passage was made; and the road, widened and improved by use, would become a very important channel for settling the western lands and opening the trade with the Indians. In urging his objections to the Pennsylvania route, Washington was doing an act grateful to Virginia, and felt that his colony would support him. Pennsylvania was as urgent on the other side, and could make out quite as good a case in its own favor. General Forbes decided in favor of Pennsylvania, and Washington said he would obey orders, though still yielding in no respect his opinion that a grievous error had been committed. So free was he in expressing his views as to draw down upon him some displeasure from above. Armstrong, who was in the Pennsylvania interest, noticed that Washington had been "a good deal sanguine and obstinate upon the occasion," and was chagrined at the outcome. General Forbes, a little offended by the pertinacity of the Virginian, wrote to Bouquet telling him to consult with Washington, "though perhaps not follow his advice, as his behavior

about the roads was no ways like a soldier." And at a late day Bouquet believed that had the Braddock road been taken, as Washington wished, the expedition would have been doomed—a belief based upon the success the delay afforded in weaning the Indian allies of the French from their hostility, and securing their passive conduct until the fort had fallen.

Thus Washington set aside his ambition to lead an advance party against Du Quesne, and turned his energies to road making and bridge building. The apathy of the French surprised him, and awakened suspicion. No intelligence could be gained of their movements, not a prisoner could be had to give this information. Studied efforts were made to deceive the enemy by sending out advance parties, now along Braddock's road, and now beyond the new route, but few discoveries of the enemy were made. In one case the observer was within two miles of the fort, but could learn nothing. Sickness increased, and Washington became more dispirited and impatient each day. In one of his despondent moods he wrote to John Robinson: "That appearance of glory, which we had once in view, that hope, that laudable ambition of serving our country, and meriting its applause, are now no more; but dwindled into ease, sloth, and fatal inactivity. In a word, all is lost, if the ways of men in power, like (certain) ways of Providence, are not inscrutable." He hinted that his leaders were under bad influences, and wished a full representation to be made to his Majesty. "Let him know how grossly his glory and interest, and the public money, have been prostituted. I wish I were sent immediately home [*i.e.*, England], as an aid to some other on this errand. I think,

without vanity, I could set the conduct of this expedition in its true colors."

By the first of September the road had reached the foot of Laurel Hill, or about thirty-five miles from the starting-point, and a body of troops had been sent forward to Loyal Hanna, about ten miles in advance, where a fort and place of deposit were to be built. The most difficult part of the road was yet to come, that crossing the mountains and lying within the enemy's territory. The frosts would soon be due, and the herbage on the line of march be destroyed, preventing the use of horses unless forage was transported from Carlyle, a very costly operation. General Forbes was known to be a sick man, and seemed not to be active in his command. Nearly a month passed without incident, when Major Grant, of the Highland battalion, with a detachment of eight hundred men, pushed on towards Du Quesne, rashly went too near, invited an engagement, and met a crushing defeat. The Virginia regiment had supplied a part of the force, and distinguished itself by its bravery, losing, as was supposed, its commanding officer, Major Andrew Lewis, and many men. Washington was publicly complimented by the General on the behavior of these troops, but this could not solace him for the sad stroke upon the regiment and the presage of misfortune it aroused. The end to be obtained by Grant's advance was not known, could not be rationally explained, and was strongly opposed by the Major Lewis whose life was believed to have been sacrificed. "Who is there," moralizes Washington, "that does not rather envy than regret a death that gives birth to honor and glorious memory." It was soon learned that Grant, Lewis, and

the other officers had been taken prisoners and sent to Montreal.

This check and the lateness of the season demonstrated the necessity for a more rapid advance, if the fort was really to be reached before winter. About the middle of October Raystown was left behind by the main body, and one month later, the advanced post of Loyal Hanna was also in the rear of the marching troops. To facilitate progress the army was divided into three columns, each one commanded by a brigadier — colonels acting as such. This division enabled them to march in shorter lines and to form more expeditiously should the enemy be met. To Washington was assigned the right wing, composed of the first Virginia regiment, two companies of artificers, and men from the neighboring colonies of Maryland and North Carolina. Every precaution was taken against surprise. Flanking parties comprising the best riflemen were sent out on either flank; light horse reconnoitred the ground as they advanced; strong parties were each night sent in every direction, and a rearguard of some weight was ordered. Even under this arrangement the advance was slow, and at the end of a day's labors it was fortunate if six or seven miles had been accomplished.

The General on reaching Loyal Hanna had called a council of war, at which the prospects of success were drawn in so low colors as to convince him that it would be inadvisable to advance farther. Had such a determination been accepted, nothing could have held the provincial forces together, the service of many expiring in December; nothing could have restrained the Indians

from open hostility against the English; nothing could have induced the colonies to again mortgage their resources to renew the contest for the western territory. A little incident changed the solemn opinion of the officers. Three prisoners fell into the hands of the English, and from them was learned the utter weakness of the garrison at Du Quesne. At once all was changed from lethargy into action. The men, encouraged by the certainty of success, were in high spirits and anxious to press forward. On November 18th Washington was still thirty miles from the fort, and still moving with great caution, still fortifying his camps. On the 24th, when yet one day's march from the end, it was learned that the French had burned the fort, and gone down the Ohio in boats, to the number of five hundred. On the next day the English occupied the ground the fort had occupied, and thus the object of four years' anxious effort was at last accomplished.

The Virginia regiment had seen hard service and was in need not only of rest, but of the very necessaries of comfort and decency. Washington proposed to march them to Winchester, and to proceed himself to Williamsburg, that he might render to the Governor a full account of the incidents of the campaign. The necessity of leaving a garrison at Du Quesne, and the difficulty of obtaining horses, detained him for some time, and he gave much thought to securing for his colony the very positive advantages that must result from the full occupation of the Ohio country. That a change of system should be introduced was not to be questioned; but the form the new plan should assume was in doubt. In the desire to obtain trade, methods had been adopted

that would not bear scrutiny, and men were engaged who were more dangerous to the safety of the country than any open foe. In 1751 Franklin had advocated the establishment of public trading houses, which would have a good effect towards regulating private trade and preventing the impositions of the private traders. Quarrels had often arisen between the colonies and the natives through the ill conduct of the licensed traders. They cheated the Indians when purchasing their lands; they cheated them when purchasing the one article the Indian had to sell — furs; and they made them drunk to have them more at their mercy. Certain colonies were so interested in securing to themselves the profits of the fur trade, that they refused to come into any arrangement for a general regulation.

Virginia had suffered through the laxity of this class of traders, to whom Indian relations had largely been left, and Washington in his experience had seen enough to be convinced that only trouble and long hostility could attend a continuance of the old system. "A trade with the Indians should be upon such terms, and transacted by men of such principles, as would at the same time turn out to the reciprocal advantage of the colony and the Indians, and which would effectually remove those bad impressions, that the Indians received from the conduct of a set of rascally fellows, divested of all faith and honor." He would have commissioners appointed from each colony to regulate this matter, a suggestion that bore fruit many years later.

With the close of the campaign Washington determined to resign his commission. The regiment was much concerned to learn of his intention, and gave

fitting expression to its regret at losing him as its commander. With nearly four years of military life he was satisfied to retire, the more readily as he had expressly cut away any expectation of seeking or obtaining rank in the regular establishment. The trial of patience, the schooling in detail, and the knowledge gained in the management of troops, were to be of greater service to him than any training he could have acquired in the King's army. The Burgesses, when he first took his place among them, gave him public thanks, which carried with them so much embarrassment that he could make no reply. To have won the good will of the colony, of his regiment, and the friendship of many in power, was grateful to him, and a reward beyond any asking.

On January 6, 1759, he was married to Martha Custis, it is believed in her own home, the White House. A Mr. Mossom performed the ceremony, known only for this one act. The early assembling of the Burgesses at Williamsburg made the attendance of Washington in that body necessary. What social life existed in the colony, apart from mere visits, centred in the capital. There is danger of exaggerating the importance of these meetings, for the remains now to be found in this town, and the established recollection of what was once there but now decayed or destroyed, hardly bear out the traditions. The governor naturally drew around him the best of the province, but this best was determined by its subserviency to his master's wishes. The Council was appointed by the King on the recommendation of the governor; and most of the important executive offices were held nominally by appointment, really by favoritism or by purchase. That the members of

the Council were men of influence need hardly be doubted ; that they, and the officers of the colony, were men reputed to be wealthy is as little open to question. None the less they used their places to protect or advance their own interests, fully conscious that the welfare of the state rested upon their welfare, and in serving themselves they were subserving the interests of the province. The sessions of the Burgesses called together the representatives of the counties and the members of the Council. The distinction between the two bodies was often lost, for the difference in the lower House between the members from the western counties and the eastern and southern representatives was greater than any that could arise between the Council and the Burgesses.

At Williamsburg, during the session, the social life centred, but it was very far from being a court. True, the governor's house was termed the "palace," and the ball given by the governor was a regular feature of each meeting of the legislature. A similar ball was given by the Council and by the Burgesses. Apart from that, the dinner formed the most general form of entertainment, and even with that to be enjoyed, it is curious to see how many times during the session Washington dined at the club, and spent the evening in his room. The treasurer, the speaker, and the attorney-general might exercise official hospitality ; all the entertainments given did not begin to consume the time of a session. The pictures of gayety during a session of the Burgesses have been too highly colored to be true to the facts. A man like Washington, who had reputation as a soldier, and was winning the confidence of his colleagues in the

legislature, would have shared largely in the social activity of the place; yet his diaries contain little upon it. Even with Mrs. Washington the record is meagre, and it was rather on the plantation than at Williamsburg that the true social life of Virginia was to be found.

CHAPTER VII

THE PLANTER

ASHINGTON, at the time of his retirement from the army, was drawn by his friend and companion in arms, George Mercer. "He may be described as being as straight as an Indian, measuring six feet two inches in his stockings, and weighing 175 pounds when he took his seat in the House of Burgesses in 1759. His frame is padded with well-developed muscles, indicating great strength. His bones and joints are large, as are his feet and hands. He is wide shouldered, but has not a deep or round chest; is neat waisted, but is broad across the hips, and has rather long legs and arms. His head is well shaped though not large, but is gracefully poised on a superb neck. A large and straight rather than a prominent nose; blue-gray penetrating eyes, which are widely separated and overhung by a heavy brow. His face is long, rather than broad, with high round cheek bones, and terminates in a good firm chin. He has a clear though rather a colorless pale skin, which burns with the sun. A pleasing,

benevolent, though a commanding countenance, dark brown hair, which he wears in a cue. His mouth is large and generally firmly closed, but which from time to time discloses some defective teeth. His features are regular and placid, with all the muscles of his face under perfect control, though flexible and expressive of deep feeling when moved by emotions. In conversation he looks you full in the face, is deliberate, deferential, and engaging. His voice is agreeable rather than strong. His demeanor at all times composed and dignified. His movements and gestures are graceful, his walk majestic, and he is a splendid horseman."

Upon returning to Mount Vernon and giving a close attention to his affairs, he found them not only in great confusion but in a situation which promised a poor support for his now increased household. Living in the manner of a Virginia planter it required the net produce of much land to obtain what was necessary or convenient, and each new person in the family must be maintained upon the same scale. What had been sufficient for his own wants proved inadequate to the new family. More land was needed, for he must farm on a larger scale; and to cultivate this land more slaves were required, as free labor could not be induced to come into the colony for service in numbers demanded by the plantation system. To secure both land and slaves ready money was essential, and this he obtained from his wife's estate, being entitled to one third of her property, and by a decree of the General Court being invested with the care of the other two thirds in behalf of the minor children of Mrs. Washington. This estate was considerable, and among other assets comprised

some stock of the Bank of England, and a fund of ready money in London. In the division that was made Washington received nearly all this fund, "since it best suits my purposes to have money that can be commanded, than money at interest."

The reason for this was his desire to add to his estate, and by preference to purchase lands adjoining what he already owned. In pursuit of this object little touches of character were developed in his business transactions. One of his neighbors, Clifton by name, had a plot of land of which Washington sought to obtain possession. An offer was made, and accepted on condition that the necessary consent of Clifton's wife should be obtained, she being concerned by right of dower. A few days later a closer agreement was made that left only the signing of the papers to complete the purchase, when Washington was surprised to learn that Clifton wished to be free of the contract entirely. Pleading the want of his wife's consent, this neighbor behaved in such a manner as to impress Washington with the belief that he was a "trifling body," a belief still further confirmed when it was discovered that he had sold this land to another person—Mason—"which fully unravelled his conduct, and convinced me that he was nothing less than a thorough paced rascal, disregardful of any engagements of words or oaths, not bound by penalties." But Washington wanted the land, and arranged to meet Clifton at the next court, where he had much discourse with him on his ungenerous behavior and ended with offering more for the land than Mason had agreed to give. Clifton undertook to disengage himself from his sale to Mason. "I did not

think myself restrained," Washington noted in his diary, "by any rules of honor, conscience, or &c. after making him this offer, as his lands were first engaged from me by the most solemn assurances that any man could give." In the end the land came to him, but the whole transaction proved how readily contracts were made and broken by a needy planter.

Having the land, it could be cultivated by certain slaves that came as part of Mrs. Washington's dower, passing by will as readily as land or any form of real property. Not having a sufficient number, he purchased others, and this involved a further expenditure for huts, farm buildings, and live-stock. For the first years he was obliged to buy provisions for his family and slaves, and to do this not for one but for three years. It would seem as if large holdings of land, under as careful cultivation as was known, and with labor that was supposed to cost only its bare maintenance, were economically wasteful, and such they proved to be.

However good the quality of the land might originally have been, the system of culture was ruinous. Tobacco was the leading commercial product, and had long been the only crop of importance in the colony's agriculture. To injure the tobacco interest of Spain that of Virginia was encouraged, and under Charles II. a monopoly market was created in Great Britain for the colonial product by prohibiting the cultivation of the plant in England and Ireland. Virginia, just before the Revolution, exported to England ninety-six thousand hogsheads of tobacco a year, of which more than eighty thousand were sold to the continent of Europe. Encouraged by natural conditions at home, and by

the enactments of Parliament supposedly in its favor, the culture of tobacco became general, until it absorbed the best lands, the best energies of the planters, and determined the kind and quality of labor employed.

The planter was really at a disadvantage. He was encouraged to exhaust his land by taking from it crop after crop of tobacco, very little being returned to the soil in the shape of a fertilizer. He was assured a sale in Great Britain, but competition determined the price, and the production was such as to make the price rule low, except in years when the partial failure of the crop gave better returns. The market was so distant that the planter was practically at the mercy of his factor, who usually owned the vessel in which the leaf was transported, and could not be called to book for any claims he might urge in defense of his sales. The long voyage, and the weakness of the craft in which it was made, often led to serious damage of the tobacco, and the factor in Glasgow or London made the most of such claims. The planter was obliged to wait for the vessel, or take any offer of freight, and on occasions the hogsheads were rolled overland from the York to the James River to catch an opportune vessel about to sail. In 1760 the returns obtained for the sweet-scented leaf, neatly packed and sent to London, were so disappointing, that Washington sold in Virginia what remained of his crop, obtaining better prices than had he exported. Two years later he enters into a study of the best methods of growing the leaf, of preparing it for the market, and shipping it in form. Not only was there advantage in the quality of tobacco, but some could be stemmed with

gain. As a steady crop, it was doubtful if tobacco was a good one, however available it was for making remittances to Great Britain in a fair year. In 1762 one of the most severe droughts ever known set in and destroyed the plants.

It was about this time that the planters were beginning to realize that tobacco was not so reliable or profitable a crop in the long run as they had been led to believe. Adam Smith says that no one spoke of the immense wealth of the tobacco planters. "I have never even heard of any tobacco plantation that was improved and cultivated by the capital of merchants who resided in Great Britain, and our tobacco colonies send us home no such wealthy planters as we see frequently arrive from our sugar islands." A series of years in which the price had been very unsatisfactory was followed by a rapid decline in the production and export. Jefferson believed a change in the climate of the colony was a partial explanation of this tendency, but the other conditions present and active were sufficient fully to explain the matter. The lands were losing heart, and the use of fertilizers could not be justified at the current prices of tobacco. The western lands were beginning to grow the plant, and favored by virgin soils they could compete successfully, and were forcing the older planting regions to abandon the culture. Jefferson saw only benefit in such a course. "It is a culture productive of infinite wretchedness. Those employed in it are in a continual state of exertion beyond the power of nature to support. Little food of any kind is raised by them; so that the men and animals on these farms are illy fed, and the earth is rapidly impoverished."

Washington was passing through this costly experience. In 1765 he was much displeased with the sales of his sweet-scented tobacco, for his agent had given him prices lower than those obtained by his neighbors for their product, and nearly as low as those given for light rent tobaccos of the meanest quality. Well aware of the steady fall in the price of tobacco for some years, he had a natural pride in the product of his fields. "I am not so extravagant as to believe, that my own and Master Custis's crops should fetch their usual prices, when other good tobacco met with abatements. But I am really selfish enough to expect, that we ought to come in for a part of good prices that are going, from a belief that our tobacco is of a quality not so much inferior to some, that still sells well." The colony was passing through a period of depression, and many estates, once very profitable to their owners, were for sale, and the impoverished families were retiring to the back country.

Close student as he was of agriculture, and a careful manager of his lands, Washington early felt the unprofitable dependence placed in a single crop, like tobacco, and determined to abandon its culture even as a means of remittance abroad. The uncertainty of even fair returns from that quarter, and the rising demand for grain in the West India islands, turned his experiments in a new direction. By 1768 he could say that he had discontinued the growth of tobacco for his own account, except at a plantation or two upon the York River, and made barely enough of the leaf to furnish him with goods from England. In that year he experienced another disappointment in the prices obtained for his crop, and served notice on his London

correspondent that it was "almost enough to bring about a change in the system of my management." So radical a change would require years of slow modification of existing methods, and a new distribution of lands and labor. While mention of the prices of wheat, flour, and corn become more frequent in his correspondence, and greater attention was paid to mills and mill sites, the change was not completed before the difference with Great Britain, and the interruption of trade with all foreign countries, checked in a great measure the development of his plans. That he was in advance of his generation in both the questions of culture and labor arose from his minute and painstaking study of every detail of his plantation interests. His mere notes on farming and the results of his own carefully planned experiments bear testimony to his industry and really high business ability. When his own account of the methods of culture in Virginia is read, the wonder is that it could be preserved through so many years. "The general custom has been, first to raise a crop of Indian corn (maize), which according to the mode of cultivation is a good preparation for wheat; then a crop of wheat; after which the ground is respited (except from weeds, and every kind of trash that can contribute to its foulness) for about eighteen months; and so on alternately, without any dressing, till the land is exhausted, when it is turned out, without being sown with grass-seed, or any method taken to restore it; and another piece is ruined in the same manner."

In another direction he was not so successful a manager, but only because conditions were opposed to any economy. In assuring a market for the tobacco of

the colonies it was demanded that the planters should make all their purchases in Great Britain. As Virginia had no manufactories of her own, and raised none of the raw materials of manufacture, everything used on the farms in the way of manufactured articles came from abroad, and almost entirely from England. At regular intervals an order for goods would be sent to the London agent, and after some months' delay, the articles would come out in a vessel, in a more or less good condition, usually damaged from the start. It was difficult to exercise a proper control over the selection of the goods, and the agent was content with what was sent to him by the maker. In so large a range of needs, from clothes and jewelry to farm utensils and negro clothes, one would have to be an expert indeed to pass upon their merits. The grade of goods known as "colonials" was of secondary quality, but was shipped freely, as the distance made protest difficult and a return of the goods costly and most inconvenient. Rather than be obliged to seek for a vessel by which to send back faulty commodities, the planter would retain the goods and expend his indignation in protests and threats of a change of custom. Secure in his monopoly, the manufacturer saw no reason for changing his system; usually a creditor of the colonist and therefore certain of his custom, the agent need only promise improvement, and quiet complaints for the time being; and the shipmaster could plead the risks of his calling and the almost certainty of damage in a long voyage, to escape a censure that might be directed against him.

However specific the directions might be, much was left to the discretion of the London factor. Washington

wished Cary to obtain blue or blue and white curtains to suit a room with Ireland paper, with coverings of the same color for a set of furniture, "in order to make the whole furniture of this room uniformly handsome and genteel"; a suit of the "finest cloth and most fashionable color"; gloves, "rather large than the middle size"; busts of prominent soldiers, among them being the King of Prussia, at this time in favor with the English, but soon to be in opposition; and "sundry small ornaments for chimney-piece." There was hardly an article of use or wear that did not enter into the invoices, and the agent was thrown upon his own taste and enterprise to fulfil the conditions. Great care was demanded to avoid blunders, and the most strenuous vigilance to escape imposition. How infrequently the results were entirely satisfactory to the Virginian the letter books of the agent would prove. The formula used by Washington, whose orders were large and of some moment to the correspondent, could not secure freedom from disappointment. "I flatter myself," he wrote, "that particular care will be taken in choosing them, the want of which gives some tradesmen an opportunity of imposing upon us most vilely." "Let me beseech you, Gentlemen," he said after some years of trying experiences, "to give the necessary directions for purchasing of them upon the best terms. It is needless for me to particularise the sorts, quality, or taste I would choose to have them in, unless it is observed. And you may believe me when I tell you that, instead of getting things good and fashionable in their several kinds, we often have articles sent us that could only have been used by our forefathers in the days of yore.

'T is a custom, I have some reason to believe with many shopkeepers and tradesmen in London, when they know goods are bespoke for exportation, to palm sometimes old, and sometimes very slight and indifferent goods upon us, taking care at the same time to advance 10, 15 or perhaps 20 per cent. upon them."

Instances of such practices were many, and annoying to a man rather particular about the settings of his house. More than once he lost patience and gave forcible expression to his displeasure. "And here I cannot forbear ushering in a complaint of the exorbitant prices of my goods this year. For many years I have imported goods from London as well as other ports of Britain, and can truly say I never had such a penny worth before. . . . Let it suffice to say that woolens, linens, nails, &c., are mean in quality, but not in price, for in this they excel indeed, far above any I have ever had." The window glass ordered for his house came of a size other than he had directed, an inattention that caused much inconvenience. A package of Duffield, a coarse woollen cloth, was found upon arrival to be "eaten to a honeycomb by moth." These were slight mischances by the side of his efforts to obtain a chariot, on the design of which he had expended much thought. It was a very necessary article in colonial Virginia, and readily lent itself to decoration and even pompous glitter according to the whim of the owner. To attend a session of the Burgesses at Williamsburg in any but a handsome coach, would have been noted with social disfavor.

In 1768, Washington ordered from London a chariot, to be made in the newest taste, handsome, genteel, and

light, of the best and fully seasoned wood, and by a celebrated workman. As green was a color little apt to fade, and was further grateful to the eye, it might be used on the body, unless some other color of equal lasting quality should be more in vogue. "In that case I would be governed by fashion. A light gilding on the mouldings (that is, round the panels) and any other ornaments, that may not have a heavy and tawdry look (together with my arms agreeable to the impression here sent) might be added, by way of decoration." Some months later the coach was shipped from London, with a full account from its maker of its many noticeable features, and with a warrant of being of the highest workmanship. The facts did not correspond to the glowing description, and Washington soon had good reason to complain of having been imposed upon, even after making some allowances for a difference of climate. The wood proved to be so exceedingly green instead of seasoned that the panels slipped out of the mouldings before the coach had been two months in use, and splitting from end to end, could not be repaired.

For some share of their troubles the planters had only themselves to blame. The colony had issued a paper money that could not be sent abroad in settlement of accounts, and by its depreciation produced uncertainty and confusion at home. The London merchants, touched by the fluctuations of this currency, sought remedy through the Board of Trade, and in so doing gave occasion to some ill feeling among the colonists. Debts due to Washington were paid in these notes, void of credit, and he suffered in making remittances. He was in debt to his correspondents in

London, and unable to make payments faster than his crops would permit — a very uncertain foundation of credit, for nature could not be anticipated. A suggestion from Cary & Company, whose constant correspondent he had been for years, to pay more rapidly was met by a little feeling of resentment, certainly excusable in a man situated as he was. "Reason and prudence naturally dictate to every man of common sense the thing that is right; and you might have rested assured, that so fast as I could make remittances without distressing myself too much, my inclinations would have prompted me to it; because, in the first place, it is but an irksome thing to a free mind to be any ways hampered in debt; and in the next place I think I have discovered no intentions since I have found how the Ballance was likely to turn, of increasing that debt . . . but on the contrary all the willingness I could, under the accidents that have happened, of decreasing it to the utmost of my power."

Costly as was this commercial dependence upon the mother country, it found no compensation at home in really certain and profitable cultures. For this the labor was in a great measure responsible, as the slave excluded the free man and represented a low degree of efficiency. Apart from his first cost, not great by itself, there was demanded a constant attention to his health and comfort, his food, clothing, and housing, and his care when sick or incapacitated. The negroes represented a very uncertain form of property, even more hazardous and perishable than live-stock. They were peculiarly subject to disease, and a distemper would sweep them off more readily than cattle or horses. In

January, 1760, Washington noted the loss of four of his negroes, one of whom was valued at £50. Ranking next to land in importance in the economy of a plantation, the slaves were regarded as real estate, and disposed of by will just as the land and plantation buildings were devised. The labor outfit of a large planter represented a handsome sum, and in 1770 Washington counted no less than one hundred and thirty-five workers —slaves, servants, and overseers—on his Fairfax County property alone.

These slaves were sometimes purchased of a newly arrived "Guinea ship," but the more usual source was from the West Indies or the breaking up of a neighboring plantation. In this way the crudities of an African would have been worn off, and he would be more tractable to his master. An unruly slave was a dangerous object, and unless he could be broken by punishment, often severe, would be shipped out of the colony. Washington was thus troubled, on one occasion, with an exceedingly healthy and strong black, good at the hoe, and serviceable as foreman of a gang. But he was both a rogue and a runaway, and so he was sent on board of a vessel bound for the Indies, to be handcuffed till out at sea, lest he should escape. Arriving at his destination, he was to be exchanged for rum, wines, old spirits, and mixed sweetmeats — articles of more utility than an ungovernable slave. This custom of sending strong negroes, not of the best moral character, to the West Indies prevailed even in the northern colonies.

These slaves were completely at the will of their owners, and appear, as a rule, to have been well treated.

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Instances might be cited of cruelty, of unusual punishment of the natural indolence of the black, or for outbursts of their animal propensities. The country was in perpetual fear of outbreaks and revolts, and few possibilities were regarded with greater terror, or could inspire more intense feeling. Their value was one reason for good treatment. A planter could not afford to maltreat them. They were looked upon as more useful to him than live-stock, and represented a higher money value. The average price of a good slave was placed by Franklin at thirty pounds sterling. His estimate was made in 1751, but in the years following the price increased, due to a growing demand and a discouragement to the slave trade. In 1754 Washington paid £52 for a negro, and nearly the same for a negro woman. Two years later, Governor Dinwiddie sold him a woman and child for £60. In the year of his marriage he bought quite a number, paying for nine an average price of £35. Again, in 1762, he made additions to his holdings, but was obliged to pay £57 a head, and in 1764 the price had still further advanced; while the troublous period following the stamp act reacted upon the price of slaves, and made them touch extravagant rates. So that a property in seventy or eighty slaves involved quite an investment of capital.

In addition to the slaves proper there was another and better trained class of negroes, who were either purchased or hired for a limited period. They were usually skilled in some following like mason work, carpentry, or wood joinery, and commanded good rents or hire,—as much as £20 a year, with all costs of maintenance. Such cases were not common, though

Washington resorted to them wherever he could. A more customary manner of obtaining this more intelligent labor was through the indentured or covenant servant. The covenant servant agreed to serve a captain of a vessel or his assigns for a certain number of years, usually five, on condition of being taken to America. The arrangement was thus a composition for the passage, and, on arriving in one of the colonies, the servant was sold for the time covenanted to the highest bidder. For that space of time he became the possession of his buyer, and, as the prices for servants were not extravagant, and they were an intelligent class, much above the negro, they readily found a market for their talents. The practice was more frequently followed in Maryland than in Virginia, and just before the defeat of Braddock, when the British recruiting officers did not hesitate to enlist indentured servants for the ranks, Governor Sharpe made a strong protest, asserting that the "planters' fortunes here consist in the number of their servants (who are purchased at high rates), much as the estates of an English farmer do in the multitude of cattle."

In 1760 Washington asked his friend and companion in arms, Dr. Craik, to engage him a gardener from the regiment, then in the Ohio valley; and he desired a Pennsylvanian, Dr. Ross, to purchase a joiner, a bricklayer, and a gardener, should any ship of servants enter at Philadelphia. John Askew, a joiner, engaged to serve for £25 a year and maintenance, and to instruct in the art of his trade any negroes Washington should cause to work with him. Free labor of an even higher quality was hired by the year. In 1770 a blacksmith received £32 a year, with a house and provisions; in

1771 a carpenter was engaged for ten months, to receive £25, a house, 300 pounds of pork, and three barrels of corn. The highest wages paid were given to a miller, £80 a year and some plantation produce, pay that shows Washington's sincerity in developing a milling industry.

Above these were the overseers, who were responsible for the due performance of Washington's directions, and the proper and full employment of the labor. They were bound to use their utmost endeavors to make a large and good crop of tobacco, corn, or whatever should be required; to take all necessary and proper care of the negroes and stock on the place; to prepare the tobacco for market, so that it should pass inspection with credit; and to measure out the corn with the greatest frugality to the farm hands and horses. Their duties were many and required discretion and vast patience, as the instruments at their disposal were not always fit for the objects to be attained. The negroes required watching that they should not visit without the consent of the overseer, or entertain strange negroes.

In spite of the great care exercised by Washington in selecting his labor, he met with many disappointments. The overseers were neglectful of their duties, maltreated the slaves, permitted them to frequent the whiskey stills, or themselves indulged too much in spirits, and ruined the horses. At a distance from the home lot, they were not under a close supervision, and took their responsibilities at times more easily than Washington could regard as just to his interests. A painter, in 1759, "before he had near finished painting my house, stole a good deal of my paint and oil, and

apprehensive of justice ran off." He was obliged to turn away a wagoner because he "behaved so remarkably ill," and discovered afterwards that the fellow had contracted debts in his name on the roads he was accustomed to travel. Servants would run away before their full time of indenture had expired, and rarely returned, as the back regions offered a place of refuge. Often a "rascally overseer" incurred the displeasure of his master, and received a strong reprimand to recall him to his duty. Even convicts, sent out from England, were employed on the plantation, occupying a position not very different from that of an indentured servant. A slave who was beyond control could be shipped out of the country as merchandise; a servant could not be got rid of by such measures, and flight was his best remedy. A good overseer was not so common as not to be worth an effort to keep, so it was only a notorious neglect of tasks or a continued failure to do what was expected that called for condemnation or the last step—a discharge.

Washington took up the study of his farm with the same conscientious thought that had directed his military experience. One of his first orders to his London agent was to send the "best system now extant of agriculture"; and a short time after he has been told of one "lately published, done by various hands, but chiefly collected from the papers of Mr. Hale. If this is known to be the best, pray send it, but not if any other is in higher esteem." It must have been with gain in his mind that he asked for a small piece in octavo, entitled "a new system of agriculture, or a speedy Way to grow rich."

A careful manager, he was observant of all around

him. On visiting an outlying plantation he found the manager drunk "according to custom." A sharp reprimand for his indolence followed; and some days later, he is found hard at work. "Very extraordinary this!" was Washington's note in his journal. On another occasion he passed his four carpenters hewing trees, and learned that all four had hewed so small a quantity as to excite his curiosity. "Sat down therefore, and observ'd," and he estimated the number of feet of plank each could make, working from sun to sun, the result being subject to modification according to the kind of wood used. In like manner he measures the capacity of his mill. "Here, also, I tried what time the mill required to grind a bushel of corn, and to my surprise found she was within 5 minutes of an hour about this. Old Anthony attributed it to the low head of water, but whether it was so or not I can't say—her works [being] all decayed and out of order, which I rather take to be the cause." The minute record of his experiments in planting wheat in differently treated soils or under varying conditions in the same field gave promise of his being a truly scientific farmer had he not been interrupted in his investigations. Even as it was, he stood among the first of experimental farmers in the colonies, having a very definite idea of the necessity for better methods and a revolution in system, but as yet only a faint conception of what should be done.

This made him eager to make a trial of any suggested improvement. In 1760 he sought to make a plow after a new model, partly of his own contriving, but failed. Not discouraged he made a plow entirely of his own invention, but met with no better success. He

sent to England for a Rotheran, or patent plow, of which he had read an account. "If the construction of them is not thoroughly understood in Liverpool, you would do me a singular favor in getting it from a place of that name in Yorkshire (where I suppose they were first invented, and now are made) for none but the true sort will answer the end of my sending for it and I had rather be at the expense of the carriage from thence than not to have the right kind or be disappointed. You will please to order it to be made exceeding light, as our lands are not so stiff as yours, nor our horses so strong." He found a mention of an engine for taking up trees by the roots, and coupled with statements of such efficient results that he wished one. "If the accounts are not greatly exaggerated, such powerful assistance must be of vast utility in many parts of this wooden country, where it is impossible for our force (and laborers are not to be hired here), between the finishing of one crop and preparations for another, to clear grounds fast enough to afford the proper changes, either in the planting or farming business."

So, in 1760, he proposes to set up iron works on some land of Colonel Fairfax, on the Shenandoah. "The convenience of water is great. First it may be taken out of the river into a canal and a considerable fall obtained; and then a run comes from the mountain on which the largest fall may be got with small labor and expence, but of the constancy of this stream I know nothing. I saw none of the ore, but all people agree that there is an inexhaustible fund of that that is rich. But wood seems to be an obstacle, not but that there is enough of it, but the ground is so hilly and rugged as

not to admit of making coal or transporting it." In 1764 Parliament granted a bounty of eight pounds sterling a ton on hemp imported from the British plantations. Although the lands of Virginia were not well suited for the culture, Washington made inquiries as to the cost of raising, shipping, and all other incidental charges, to determine if there was sufficient profit in it to permit its substitution for other crops of rather uncertain returns.

The weak point in all farming operations in Virginia lay in the absence of live-stock. The cattle were few and of a poor quality, sheep were almost unknown save as a half-wild breed supplying meat rather than wool. The fibre was coarse and only a kind of hair. Both cattle and sheep received so little attention that their good points were lost and the stock as a rule actually deteriorated. Allowed to wander at will, to get a precarious living from the wild or waste fields, and without shelter even in the severest weather, they became indifferent and of little utility to the farm. With horses it was far otherwise. Great attention was given to these animals, both as objects of taste and beasts of burden.

The fall and winter offered the sport of fox-hunting, and it appealed so strongly to the tastes of the Virginia farmer as to lead him often afar and at all times in the chase. He is even found directing paths to be cut through the forests to make the running easier, and his hounds were the objects of much serious attention. To start a fox at ten in the morning and run him till three in the afternoon represented a good day's sport, even if the hunted animal escaped. Again and again was

the entry made, "started a fox, but catched nothing," and it is almost with a touch of chagrin that after days of such fruitless coursing he meets some friends returning from a hunt with two foxes in their hands.

CHAPTER VIII

WESTERN LANDS

N occasional visit to the Annapolis races, the regular sessions of the Burgesses, and quite as regular attendance on the County Courts, — these were the amusements and outside occupations of Washington. "We have few things here," he wrote to a kinsman in England, "striking to European travellers (except our abundant woods) ; but little variety, or welcome reception among a few friends, and the open and prevalent hospitality of the country in general, might perhaps prove agreeable for a while, and I must be permitted to add, that I shall think myself very happy in seeing you at Mt. Vernon where you might depend upon finding the most cordial entertainment." His estates were sufficient to keep him occupied, for all accounts passed through his hands and were entered in his ledger, even to the shillings he loaned his mother or brothers. The few pence lost at a home game of cards received as full attention as the expenditure of hundreds of pounds for slaves, or thousands for lands. The cost of every yard of cloth made on the

place, the weight of every pig killed, and the allowances of provisions made to overseer or servant, were recorded by him, and at stated intervals were summarized. This close care and attention were needed, for the produce of the estate was not very much larger in a good year than what was called for by the remittances to Europe. In a bad year, some economy had to be enforced or an extension of credit obtained in London, neither operation being much to his liking. As it was he was fortunate in not being deeply in debt, like so many of his neighbors.

His attention was not absorbed in little things. He had the management of the properties of the children of Mrs. Washington. Master John Parke Custis was at this time six years old, and his sister, Martha Parke Custis, better known as Patey, was two years younger. The boy was just beginning to read, but still called for ten shillings' worth of toys in the annual order on London; while the girl naturally desired a "fashionable-dressed baby" and other toys to the amount of twenty shillings. As they grew older, tutors were engaged for them, and they received instruction in music, and in dancing, the one an accomplishment, the other a science.

The health of little Martha Custis, or Patey, as she was affectionately called, was frail, and gave her parents great anxiety. The specifics for her trouble savored more of quackery than of knowledge, and after exhausting the usual remedies Washington saw fit to call in Joshua Evans, who put an iron ring upon the child's finger. This denoted a survival of a mediæval practice, for rings hallowed on Easter day or Good Friday were supposed to protect the wearer from the cramp and falling

sickness; but whether Evans made the ring according to rule, of three nails or screws which had been used to fasten a coffin, and therefore must be dug out of the churchyard, the brief note of the incident by Washington does not say. For more than five years Patey continued in uncertain life, the object of every care and tenderness her parents could give, and in 1773 the end came suddenly, without a word, a groan, or scarce a sigh. The brother, Jacky, was in New York at the time, and the loss fell with crushing weight upon Mrs. Washington. "This sudden, and unexpected blow, I scarce need add," wrote Washington to Colonel Bassett, "has almost reduced my poor wife to the lowest ebb of misery"; and he sought to induce Mrs. Dandridge to make Mount Vernon her entire and absolute home, believing that companionship would be the best solace.

If feeling may be gauged by utterance, the few words written by Washington on Patey's loss were expressive of great sensibility. "Yesterday removed the sweet innocent girl entered into a more happy and peaceful abode than any she has met with in the afflicted path she hitherto has trod." With that his thoughts turned to the living, and the comfort of his wife occupied his endeavor. Only a month had passed since he had been called upon to condole with Mr. Bassett in the loss of his daughter. "That we sympathize in the misfortune, and lament the decree which has deprived you of so dutiful a child, and the world of so promising a young lady, stands in no need, I hope, of argument to prove; but the ways of Providence being inscrutable, and the justice of it not to be scanned by the shallow eye of humanity, nor to be counteracted by the utmost

efforts of human power or wisdom, resignation, and as far as the strength of our reason and religion can carry us, a cheerful acquiescence to the Divine Will, is what we are to aim at; and I am persuaded that your own good sense will arm you with fortitude to withstand the stroke, great as it is, and enable you to console Mrs. Bassett, whose loss and feelings are much to be pitied."

Jacky Custis was placed under the care of an English clergyman, Jonathan Boucher, who had a parish in Virginia, and later in Maryland, a man of some attainments, but more of a politician than divine. The boy was fourteen when he went to Boucher's house, "untainted in his morals and of innocent manners," reading Virgil and about to enter upon the Greek testament. Washington's idea was to "make him fit for more useful purposes than horse racer," and even considered sending him for a tour in Europe, with his tutor, a manner of finishing an education much practised in the southern colonies. In December, 1770, it was noticed that Jacky's mind was a good deal released from study, and more than ever turned to dogs, horses, and guns, as well as on dress and equipage. Washington sought to impress upon Boucher the need of closely watching the young man, and of giving him most friendly aid and counsel. His general scheme of an education was outlined: "In respect to the kinds, and manner of his studying, I leave it wholely to your better judgment. Had he begun, or rather pursued his study of the Greek language, I should have thought it no bad acquisition; . . . To be acquainted with the French Tongue is become a part of polite Education; and to a man who has the prospect of mixing in a large circle, absolutely

necessary. Without Arithmetick, the common affairs of Life are not to be managed with success. The study of Geometry, and the Mathematics (with due regard to the limits of it) is equally advantageous. The principles of Philosophy, Moral, Natural, &c, I should think a very desirable knowledge for a Gentleman."

The tutor appears to have been a little remiss, and while urging a foreign tour, permitted his charge to become attached to Miss Nellie Calvert, and to go so far as to ask her in marriage. Not a little annoyed, Washington urged his youth, inexperience, and unripened education, as insuperable obstacles to the union, and wished for a delay of two or three years, that Jacky might go to college and "thereby render himself more deserving of the lady and useful to society." His wish was granted, and Custis was sent to King's College, New York, then in charge of Dr. Myles Cooper, where he remained only a few months.

As a member of the Burgesses Washington has left little of record, but has drawn his own policy for the benefit of the younger men to whom he offered counsel. When Bushrod had made his first speech, he wrote: "The only advice I will offer to you on the occasion (if you have a mind to command the attention of the House,) is to speak seldom, but to important subjects, except such as particularly relate to your constituents; and, in the former case, make yourself perfectly master of the subject. Never exceed a decent warmth, and submit your sentiments with diffidence. A dictatorial stile, though it may carry conviction, is always accompanied with disgust." And on John Parke Custis he impressed the need of punctual attendance, and to hear

dispassionately and determine coolly all great questions, not being disgusted if the decision should not be consonant to his own ideas.

He found an outlet for some of his energy in obtaining a part of the western territory. The country to the west of the Alleghanies had been thrown open to settlement by the reduction of Fort Du Quesne. No longer threatened by the French from Canada, and less open than before to Indian incursion, these lands offered a fair field for a reasonable speculation. From Pennsylvania, as well as from Virginia, a stream of emigrants set out for this new region, intending to establish themselves where they could best attain their own support, free from the restraints that had already made themselves felt in the older and long-settled parts of the colonies. Among these emigrants were numbered many who were going west to avoid their creditors; many who had been ne'er-do-wells in the colony, and many who were led on by the love of adventure, by the desire for novelty. It was not a lawless crowd, such as is attracted by the opening of a newly discovered gold field; but there was enough of the rougher element to make it interesting, even dangerous. In every respect they were unrestrained in their thoughts and actions, and looked with disdain upon the attempt of either Virginia or Pennsylvania to become their tax-gatherers, their sheriffs, or their protectors. Strong in themselves, they sought neither assistance nor protection from the colonial governors; and left to themselves they developed an independence that at times seemed erratic, so much was it out of line with the sentiment controlling their distant neighbors and would-be rescuers.

That there was much rich land on the Ohio was well known to Washington, for he had carefully noted such places as had met his eye on his first and very eventful journey to the French fort. He was entitled to a certain bounty in these lands under the Governor's proclamation, and he now determined to locate at least a part of these claims, before the pick of the land had been taken by others. A brave and adventurous man who had served under General Forbes, William Crawford by name, was at this time in the Ohio valley, and to him Washington made known his wishes. His personal knowledge of the region came in good stead, for he could give definite directions for gauging his wishes, directions not untempered by shrewdness. "It will be easy for you to conceive, that ordinary or even middling land would never answer my purpose or expectation, so far from navigation, and under such a load of expenses, as these lands are encumbered with. No; a tract to please me must be rich, (of which no person can be a better judge than yourself,) and, if possible, to be good and level. Could such a piece of land as this be found, you would do me a singular favor in falling upon some method to secure it immediately from the attempts of any other, as nothing is more certain, than that the lands cannot remain long ungranted, when once it is known, that rights are to be had for them."

These particular lands were in control of Pennsylvania, but there were better fields to be obtained beyond, in the King's part, the settlement of which was prohibited by royal proclamation in 1763. The principal object of this act was to quiet the apprehensions of the Indians, fearful lest their grounds might be overrun

from the colonies and themselves driven westward or shot as incumbrances of the land. Both the lands and the commerce of the Indians were taken under royal protection, but it was a paper protection. In 1767, or after four years of the proclamation, Washington recognized the futility of enforcing it. "I can never look upon that proclamation in any other light (but this I say between ourselves), than as a temporary expedient to quiet the minds of the Indians, and must fall, of course, in a few years, especially when those Indians are consenting to our occupying the lands." Negotiations had long been on foot in New York for determining more definitely the limits of settlements, and the line agreed upon by the Indians gave Virginia room to expand to the westward. Although Sir William Johnson was the representative of the English in this agreement, he could not give his final approval without authority from the King, and as late as 1769 this authority had not been given. In spite of the prohibition of 1763 settlers flowed into this forbidden land, and only a year before Washington was seeking to obtain plots, the Governor of Virginia issued a proclamation calling upon all these interlopers to leave the territory, "which if they shall fail to do, they must expect no protection or mercy from government, and be exposed to the revenge of the exasperated Indians."

As a speculation, land was profitable only in large quantities. Where millions of acres might be had, great selection was needed to secure a desirable holding. Hence Washington's urgency that Crawford should secure "some of the most valuable lands in the King's part," for ordinary land was a glut and could command

no price for a long time to come. Hence also his desire to obtain a good deal of land, in large tracts, and "it might be desirable to have them as near your settlement, or Fort Pitt, as we could get them good, but not to neglect others at a greater distance, if fine bodies of it lie in a place. . . . For my own part, I should have no objection to a grant of land upon the Ohio, a good way below Pittsburg, but would willingly secure some good tracts nearer hand first." Above all, secrecy must be maintained, as on that depended success in the venture.

Even secrecy could not undo what had already been accomplished, and certain companies or associations were in existence whose claims might cover this very land. The process of buying lands of the Indians was simple only when it was done by the royal government and under a formal act of cession or treaty. Private traders or individuals had obtained from the natives what they denominated rights, but the compensation given was too often nominal, and the consent of the sellers was more apt to be given under the influence of fear or of liquor than voluntarily. At a council held in 1763, at German Flats, under the auspices of Sir William Johnson, the Indians offered to cede all their lands east of the Ohio for a fair consideration, but the offer was not accepted. The existence of French settlements in this region, and the easier communication with Canada on the north, and even with the Spanish settlements to the south, turned in those directions a certain share of the fur trade, always the basis of the trade with the Indians. To destroy this French influence, and monopolize for English interests the fur trade,

some men of influence, associated with others, formed a design of purchasing a large tract of this country, and establishing a permanent settlement upon it — a colony in the Illinois. There is no doubt such a venture would have strengthened the position of the colonists, as it would have tended to consolidate their interests in this territory, newly acquired under the treaty with France. The authorities at home, when permission was requested, looked doubtfully on the project. So distant a settlement could not be of much use to the English, for it could not buy of their manufactures, the cost of carriage preventing. This difficulty would lead the settlers to manufacture for themselves, something abhorrent to the commercial and industrial policy of the day. For the same reason, it would be difficult to defend and to govern it; and inasmuch as the ministry were just experiencing the results of the ill-advised stamp-tax, they felt the decided tendency of remote dependencies to become unmanageable. Hence they believed "it might lay the foundation of a power in the heart of America, which in time might be troublesome to the other colonies, and prejudicial to our government over them; and that people were wanted both here and in the already settled colonies, so that none could be spared for a new colony."

Another project of much the same nature was that of the "military adventurers," growing out of an association formed by General Phineas Lyman of Connecticut, who had served with great credit in the recent war in America, but had not met with the consideration he deserved. He was anxious to obtain for his company the lands that Governor Franklin intended for the Illinois settlement, and going in person to London, to urge

his plan, met an advance from Benjamin Franklin to unite the two schemes. This promised to quiet all differences between the two claimants, but did not make the underlying basis any more acceptable to the ministry. It is true a cabinet council approved the plan, but the real contest must occur in the Board of Trade, to which it was now referred. This was in 1768, and here the matter slept for some years without any action being taken upon it.

While these negotiations were going on in England the military commander of Fort Pitt, Lieutenant-Colonel John Wilkins, construed his administrative powers with such liberality as to make large grants of land, and among them one of thirty thousand acres, lying between the village of Kaskaskia and Prairie du Rocher. The men who obtained this grant were three merchants of Philadelphia, John Baynton, Samuel Wharton, and George Morgan, and this liberal gift was made because by their trading they had "greatly contributed to his Majesty's service." It could not be shown at the time how Wilkins had exceeded his powers, giving what he had no authority to give; and the rumor of such large slices of the new lands being granted was sufficient to disturb any whose thoughts were tending towards the possession of them. In England some advance was made. A new company was formed, in which were found a wealthy London banker, Thomas Walpole, Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Pownall, a man well versed in American affairs, John Sargent, George Croghan, Sir William Johnson, and Samuel Wharton, a list of names sufficient to show that the many different interests had found a common ground and were now working in union. This

common ground was probably the opposition of Lord Hillsborough, who did not play a very respectable part in the proceedings. The society first approached the Treasury, and purchased a tract large enough for a government, the lands lying on the Ohio River. Lord Hillsborough, not having the power to set aside such a transaction, suggested that it would be right that the society should have a charter of government, in consequence of its purchase, and accordingly application was made to the Council Board that the grant should issue. After that step had been gained, the Board of Trade must be faced, and here the plan was met by a report from Hillsborough that gave it a serious check. After encouraging the company to apply for a larger grant, and for a charter, his opposition was a bit of double-dealing for which Franklin made him pay dearly.

The officers and soldiers of the Virginia regiment wished to locate their land grants under the Governor's proclamation of 1754, but found a formidable opponent in the old Ohio Company. The Governor, before taking final action, asked Washington to express an opinion on the company's claim. He did not hesitate to assert that if obtained, it would give a fatal blow to the interests of Virginia. As a member of the community he naturally looked at the question in its general relations. As an individual, interested in a just settlement, and acting in some degree as the representative of the officers and soldiers who claimed two hundred thousand acres of this very land under a solemn act of government adopted at a very important and critical period to the King's affairs in America, he could give weighty reasons for not yielding to the adverse contention.

Most of the regiment had suffered in their persons or fortunes in the cause of their country, few had secured any benefit by the service, and the land in dispute had been gained largely by their efforts and at the sacrifice of their blood and treasure.

It was a question that could not be determined at once, and pending a decision Washington, in August, met the officers of his old regiment at Captain Weedon's, in Fredericksburg, where they dined and discussed the matter until sunset. The right of their claim was not in dispute, and it was so far assumed that it must eventually be conceded as to induce Washington to make a journey to the Ohio country — their promised land — to make a personal examination of the lands. Taking a fellow campaigner, Dr. James Craik, as a companion, and two servants with one of the Doctor's, he set out in October, 1770. The first few days were no more propitious than those marking his first venture of 1754. His pack horse gave out almost at once, and on the second day one of his servants, Billy, was taken ill and had to be left with Dr. Craik, while Washington went to Crawford's to get information. With new horses the journey was resumed, and careful note is made of the places known to him when in service. The party breakfasted at the Little Meadows, and lodged at the Great Crossings. The next day brought them to the fateful Great Meadows and across Laurel Hill, every step awakening memories of the earlier experiences. The land up to this point had been indifferent, but at Gist's it became "charming," being rich and black, and lying flat. Passing from Gist's to Crawford's, whose holding was on the river and was noticeably good, he

saw spots exceedingly rich and in general free from stone.

At Crawford's he made a visit to a coal mine, which "seemed to be of the very best kind, burning freely, and abundance of it." He also had an opportunity of seeing how well Crawford had carried out his injunctions as to land. For he viewed a tract of about sixteen hundred acres chosen for him near the river, which included "some as fine land as ever I saw, and a great deal of rich meadow, and in general leveller than the country about it. This tract is well watered, and has a valuable mill-seat, (except that the stream is rather too slight, and, it is said, not constant more than seven or eight months in the year; but on account of the fall, and other conveniences, no place can exceed it.)" His observation was keen, for he notices what was "extraordinary, and contrary to the property of all other lands I ever saw before, the hills are the richest lands." Whatever person he met was closely questioned as to lands elsewhere, river routes and size of rich bottoms. On the seventeenth, or only twelve days after leaving Mount Vernon, he arrived at Fort Pitt, lodging in the town, a little distance from the fort, at a very good house of entertainment. What had been intended as a place of deposit, a log building to mark one stage in the Indian road, had become a town composed of twenty log houses, ranged into streets. Sailing down as far as the Kanawha, the lay of the land was noted, and marks made when favorable locations offered. The return voyage was much impeded by rains, and on December 1st, or nine weeks and one day after setting out, Washington reached Mount Vernon.

By his visit of inspection he was convinced that the soldiers' claims could be met with lands of very high quality on the Ohio, provided the consent of government could be gained. It was not enough to plead the promise of the proclamation of 1754; some definite measure must be taken to set the machinery of the executive in motion, and no measure was so eligible as the united action of the claimants. By example and by correspondence Washington sought to bring about a union, and to combine all claims, as well those which were held by persons desirous to join in the movement, as those which were standing in the names of the indifferent, the dead, the poverty-stricken, or the absent. He became the agent and spokesman for the regiment, and planned the details of the approaches upon the Governor in Virginia, and even upon the land companies in England.

The Governor and Council, it is true, had allotted the land, but under conditions that made its location difficult and expensive. To each claimant was assigned a certain number of acres according to his rank, and it only remained to collect sufficient money from the regiment to pay the extraordinary cost of surveys. Naturally, some of the men did not care to go to such an expense, in a venture that might turn out badly, and certainly promised to be successful only after a long delay and possibly some litigation with the proposed government of the Illinois. Washington, who certainly had confidence in the success of the plan, bought up some of these claims, paying for them prices that were low for the lands they called for, but not low considering the risks of failure. Further, he had been

at great expense in the preliminary arrangements, having paid all the fees of office and many drafts of the surveyor; and he saw but little prospects of his being reimbursed for his outlay. It was only just, therefore, that he should secure some advantage from those who were indifferent to owning the lands, or unwilling to pay the necessary charges. On his shoulders had rested the whole business, and had it not been for his unremitted attention to every favorable circumstance, the grant never would have been carried through the Council.

General Lyman's scheme now took the form of a plan for colonizing Florida, which had been thrown open for settlement after 1763. Whether this grew out of the delays attending the recognition of the Walpole grant, cannot be determined; but in 1773, himself wearied of waiting for action on his petition for lands in Florida, Lyman sent a party from New York to take possession and establish a colony. Towards this country Washington turned his attention, and desired to have a part of his land rights located in the new settlement. He wanted lands on the river, as high up the Mississippi as navigation was good, and of high quality. Nothing seems to have come of this intention, for Lyman discovered that the Governor had no authority to grant lands under the expected conditions.

Having obtained patents for upwards of twenty thousand acres of land on the Ohio and Great Kanawha rivers, Washington prepared to make use of them. Under the grant, the lands were free of quit rents for fifteen years, but under a law of Virginia a certain part of them must be improved, or the grant would be

forfeited. With a view to entice tenants, Washington advertised his holdings, not erring on the side of moderation in picturing their superiority and many advantages. Conditions were made for meadow and fruit orchards; the situation on the river was extolled, carrying a plenty of fine fish and wild fowl; the easy distance from Fort Pitt, and from the head of the Potomac, to which a canal would soon be opened, made these lands of special value. Through Philadelphia a stream of immigrants poured, bound for the Ohio. There were families from Ireland, from England, from Germany, and even from Corsica or Italy. Already there was a large settled area around Fort Pitt, well peopled and giving every promise of future importance; and it seemed only a question of time when Washington's property would be in demand. So certain was he of the prospect that he was desirous of adding to his holdings, and was particularly anxious to obtain some of the salt springs, which he "would immediately turn to an extensive public benefit as well as private advantage."

As neither his personal nor political interests were successful in attracting settlers, Washington planned to import some Palatines from Germany, though few of this description had come to Virginia, owing, it was thought, to the restraints put upon their liberty of conscience, but really owing in part to slave labor. The risk and expense were so great as to deter him from carrying out this venture; but the claims and the annoyances coming from the Ohio induced him to purchase four men convicts, four indented servants, and a man and his wife for four years, at a price regarded as high, but explained by the scarcity of such labor in the

market. These were sent, with a number of carpenters, to build houses and clear the lands on the Ohio, but were greatly interfered with by the appearance of a rival party from Virginia, who proceeded to survey the military bounty lands for other interests. Nearly a year later, in January, 1775, a second party was sent out by Washington, to unite with what remained of the first, — four of the servants had been sold — and met with no greater success, losing all they took with them, and melting away before the rising political difference with the mother country. Thus at the beginning of the Revolution Washington held a claim to large tracts of land in the Ohio country, to which he had been unable to bring what was essential to their cultivation, and by purchasing the Great Meadows had secured the land on which Fort Necessity had stood.

CHAPTER IX

THE REVOLUTION

SINCE the conquest of Canada and the treaty of 1763, the attention of the ministry was directed to their dependencies. The control over the older colonies had been almost entirely guided by commercial and industrial reasons, and had proved fairly successful. Enough freedom was allowed the governed to work out their own ends in local or domestic affairs, though not a colony was without its grievance against what were termed acts of tyranny and oppression. Opposition to the decrees of the mother country was limited, rarely expressed, and would not have given cause for a separation had it not been concentrated, superheated, by wanton acts of real oppression, and compelled to show itself in rebellion. The very isolation of the colonies, the jealousies existing among them, their diversity of interests, and the different standing they had before the acts of Parliament and the mercantile system, would have prevented united action. The ministry took a step that made union inevitable and separation from Great Britain a necessity, by seeking to collect a revenue from the colonies through a stamp duty.

Washington was quick to reflect the general sentiment of the Virginian Assembly, and his influence was at once thrown on the side of the opposition to the act. "What may be the result of this, and of some other (I think I may add) ill-judged measures, I will not undertake to determine; but this I may venture to affirm, that the advantage accruing to the mother country will fall greatly short of the expectations of the ministry; for certain it is, that our whole substance does already in a manner flow to Great Britain, and that whatsoever contributes to lessen our importations must be hurtful to their manufacturers."

The repeal of this obnoxious measure brought temporary relief to the pent-up feelings of the colonists, and expressions of gratitude to those who had aided in the repeal should have warned the ministry of the delicate ground they were treading. The assertion of the right to control the dependencies in all things was permitted to pass as a mere assertion of a power, without an expectation that it would be exercised; least of all applied in a manner certain to again arouse and embitter the antagonism to the original act. The momentary relief was grateful to the serious-minded Washington. "Unseasonable as it may be, to take any notice of the repeal of the Stamp Act at this time, yet I cannot help observing, that a contrary measure would have introduced very unhappy consequences. Those, therefore, who wisely foresaw such an event, and were instrumental in procuring the repeal of the act, are, in my opinion, deservedly entitled to the thanks of the well-wishers to Britain and her colonies, and must reflect with pleasure, that, through their means, many scenes

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of confusion and distress have been prevented. Mine they accordingly have, and always shall have, for their opposition to any act of oppression ; and that act could be looked upon in no other light by every person, who would view it in its proper colors."

Quieted only for a time, the alarm of the colonies again broke out two years later against the duties imposed by Parliament on certain commodities sent to America. The non-importation agreement of the merchants of Philadelphia, taken reluctantly and only under great pressure, went into Virginia as a model to be imitated. The resolution reached the hands of Washington before the May session of the Burgesses, and he turned to his friend and able adviser, George Mason, for suggestions. Not that he was without ideas of his own, ideas certainly in accord with those of the advanced of his day. How could their "lordly masters in Great Britain" be hindered in their attempt to deprive America of its liberty? "That no man should scruple, or hesitate a moment, to use arms in defence of so valuable a blessing, on which all the good and evil of life depends, is clearly my opinion. Yet arms, I would beg leave to add, should be the last resource." He approved the scheme of closing importations, although the difficulties in the way of a full compliance were greater in the tobacco colonies than in those to the north of them. Only a complete stoppage of trade could accomplish the desired end; and if any do not come into an association or agreement not to buy imported goods, they "ought to be stigmatized, and made the objects of public reproach." The poverty of the people favored the plan, for enforced economy, he

firmly believed, would do more to extricate the country from its distresses than any other one measure.

It was Mason who drew up the Association which Washington carried to the Assembly. Protesting against the stamp duties, the signers bound themselves to encourage industry and frugality, by discouraging all manner of luxury and extravagance; to refrain from importing or purchasing any imported article taxed by the act of Parliament; to countermand orders for goods already given; not to import slaves or wines, or purchase any that should be imported.

Lord Botetourt, meeting the Burgesses for the first time, was alarmed by certain of their resolutions dangerous to the prerogative of the King, and dissolved the Assembly. Meeting at the house of Anthony Hay, the Burgesses adopted Mason's Association. Washington was one of the signers, and on the following night went to the Governor's palace to celebrate the Queen's birthnight. Finding some obstacles to the observance of the Association, a new one was circulated in 1770, more carefully drawn, yet somewhat relaxed in its provisions.

Washington strictly conformed to the engagements entered into, and wrote to his agents: "If there are any articles contained in either of the respective invoices (paper only excepted) which are taxed by act of Parliament for the purpose of raising a revenue in America, it is my express desire and request, that they may not be sent, as I have very heartily entered into an association not to import any article which now is, or hereafter shall be taxed for this purpose until the said act or acts are repealed. I am therefore particular in mentioning this matter, as I am fully determined to adhere

religiously to it, and may perhaps have wrote for some things unwittingly which may be under these circumstances." The merchants of other colonies began to import, and as the success of the prohibition depended upon its being universally observed, the plan failed, leaving a legacy of disputes and charges of bad faith.

The English ministry had not exhausted its powers of annoying the colonies with assertions of its supremacy, and the situation at Boston gave it a new opening. The refusal by all the colonies to receive the hated taxed tea, which represented to them an exercise of tyranny, and its destruction at Boston, brought matters to a head both in America and in England. Massachusetts appealed to her sister provinces, and Parliament followed the lead of the King in punishing her after a manner entirely beyond the deserts of her conduct. To close the port, to suspend all government, and to deprive the people of the right to defend themselves against attack and injustice, were measures more suited to a despotic government in the East, than to one that prided itself upon being more liberal than any of the European powers. The news of these harsh measures went through the colonies, already prepared by their committees of correspondence, and long anxious over the possibilities of action on the part of the mother country. It found the Burgesses of Virginia in session, but no state of preparedness could prevent a feeling of "infinite astonishment and equal resentment" at the form of the Parliament's action. A day of fasting and prayer was appointed, leading to the dissolution of the Assembly. Washington noted in his diary on June 1st, "Went to church and fasted all day."

On the day after the Assembly had been dissolved by the Governor, eighty-nine of the members met in the long room of the Raleigh tavern, known as the Apollo, and drew up an Association, reciting their grievances against Great Britain, recommending the disuse of East India products, and, accepting the cause of Boston as their own, recommended a general congress. This irregularly constituted body then adjourned. Washington's course, for he was present, did not affect his relations to the royal representatives. He dined on this day with the Treasurer of the colony, and in the evening attended the ball given by the Burgesses to Lady Dunmore. The attitude was one of conciliation, and Lord Dunmore was assured by some of the Burgesses that they accepted the first resolution without a full appreciation of its scope. Otherwise, they said, its fate would have been different. After the ball, the people's representatives appear to have scattered, most of them leaving Williamsburg for their homes.

Among those remaining were Peyton Randolph, who had acted as moderator at the Raleigh meeting, and Washington, who was detained by a wish to visit the Bassetts. Sunday, the 29th of May, letters were received from Boston, recommending a union of the southern colonies against the vigorous and unconstitutional measures of the ministry. Randolph issued a call, and on Monday twenty-five of the Burgesses again met and united in a letter inviting the members of the late House of Burgesses to meet at Williamsburg on August 1st, a very unusual step to take, as the Governor alone, or his representative, had in the past issued such a summons. Nothing further could be done, and it only

remained to await the effect of these decidedly radical measures. Washington, having taken full part in everything that was done, went with Mrs. Washington to Eltham, but early returned to the capital to attend, among other duties, a meeting of the society for promoting useful knowledge. On the 16th he dined with Lord Dunmore, who, by this time, had become convinced that the loyalty and affection publicly declared by many of the families of distinction, would avail but little against the turbulence and prejudice prevailing throughout the country. He could not yet denounce the Burgesses as rebels, but he could see that the leadership had passed from those who had always been on the King's side to those who, like Henry, had not hesitated to talk treason — if any criticism of royalty be treason.

The inhabitants of Fairfax County appointed delegates to attend a colonial convention, and in resolutions drawn by George Mason, expressed their policy. To cease the importing of British products was the one step promising relief, and Washington hoped there was enough public virtue to deny themselves everything but the bare necessaries of life to accomplish this end.

On August 1st a convention of delegates from the counties of Virginia met at Williamsburg, and elected delegates to represent the colony in the general congress to be held at Philadelphia. The choice fell upon a very strong set of representatives, men worthy to stand by the side of those from any colony. Peyton Randolph was a trained parliamentarian, and his name and experience carried weight. Richard Henry Lee was one of the younger leaders of the Burgesses, eloquent and learned in the law and principles of government.

Washington, third in the list, was chosen for his military career and for his solid qualities that had brought him to the front in his own colony. Without any of the orator's gifts, and with little knowledge of the theories of the relations of dependency to mother country, over which there was so much refining, he absorbed enough from others to understand the issue, and his common sense prevented him from making wild deductions from or applications of the catch-phrases of agitation. Patrick Henry had won a right to be on the delegation through his remarkable eloquence, to the quality of which two such different judges as Thomas Jefferson and George Mason bore witness. The want of a substantial foundation for his repute was not felt at a time when the great object was to arouse the people. Richard Bland knew the history of Virginia as few men of his time knew it, and in controversial writing stood high among those who had seen this side of his activity. Benjamin Harrison was the least of the men associated with him, and enjoyed a standing much above his merits. Neither as a member of Congress nor as Governor did he fulfil the promise of his admirers. Edmund Pendleton closed the list, a man as much underrated as Harrison was overpraised, yet by no means a great man. His knowledge of the law was good, and he had a ready pen; but he had not the learning of Bland nor the somewhat ponderous influence of Randolph. Altogether it was a notable delegation, bringing high credit on the colony.

On the afternoon of August 30th, Pendleton, Henry, and Mason met at Mount Vernon and spent the night. It was Mason who had drawn the Fairfax resolutions,

and his influence was strong in directing Virginia sentiment. Yet Henry was even more powerful, for he could sway men's judgment by his eloquence, transmuting into electrical energy the calm and legally phrased ideas of Mason and Pendleton. On the following day, after dinner, the three delegates to the Congress set out for Philadelphia. They passed through Annapolis, through New Castle, and through Chester, but nowhere was any demonstration met. Unlike their more notorious colleagues from Massachusetts, their progress was not marked by the assembling of curious or enthusiastic crowds, or by the attention of the local militia. The northerners were martyrs to the cause; but the southerners held in their power the remedy for the evils so much abhorred and pressing so heavily on Massachusetts.

The Congress met and the most powerful influence soon made itself felt. The men from Boston were looked upon as the radicals, as in danger of going too far in their efforts to obtain recognition among the colonies and redress from England. They had been warned to be moderate, and not show the full strength of the feeling of injury so bitterly resented. They had a claim on the pity of their sister colonists, but they could not be expected to have their utmost wishes implicitly fulfilled. There were other matters at issue besides their oppression, and they must follow the counsels of the majority. Coming with this somewhat subdued manner, it did not take them long to discover that at least Virginia could be counted upon as an ally in almost any venture. Lee and Henry were as advanced in their opinions as either of the Adamses, and such

congenial minds soon came into a united effort. Virginia was recognized by the choice of Peyton Randolph as president; and to secure the good will of a middle colony, Charles Thomson was made the secretary. The petition to the King and an association on imports and exports were the vital features of the products of the Congress.

The proceedings of the Continental Congress were approved by Virginia, and the association was readily accepted. Committees were chosen in each county to enforce its provisions, and their acts were not always consonant with justice or humanity. Independent companies were raised, nominally to protect these committees and carry into execution their decrees; but in reality there was the possibility of their being used against government if occasion required. The courts of justice were closed, and affairs took on a very disagreeable aspect. It was asserted in December that a thousand men had been raised in the territory lying between the Rappahannock and the Potomac rivers, and were under the command of Washington. It is certain that Washington, in November, was ordering muskets, uniforms and drum colors from Philadelphia, for the company of Dumfries County. In February, 1775, the citizens of Fairfax County met to enroll their militia and levy a tax to defray the expenses. Washington presided over the meeting, but does not appear to have been chosen to command this force. One month later Richmond County asked him to take command of their companies should they "be obliged to have recourse to arms to defend their king and country." The martial spirit was abroad in the colony, extorting praise even

from the shallow and interested English officer, Charles Lee. "Virginia and Maryland ride most noble mettled coursers. But to drop this jockey metaphor, they are a noble spirited people. Never was such vigor and concord heard of, not a single traitor, scarcely a silent dissentient. The whole country is full of soldiers, all furnished, all in arms."

In this situation the convention of Virginia assembled in the old church in the town of Richmond. The acts and papers of the general Congress were approved, and thanks were given to the delegates from the colony who had aided in the deliberations of that body. On March 23d Patrick Henry introduced resolutions for arming the colony, by constituting the militia. The act of raising a force meant war, for the reasons given were inadequate to explain, if the troops were for colonial use only. Henry ridiculed the idea of peace when there was no peace, and insisted on the duty of preparing for war. So extreme views were not acceptable to the more conservative members. Washington, wrote a contemporary, "was prominent, though silent," and was elected a delegate to the second Continental Congress.

The King's speech contained no conciliatory thought, and the addresses of the two Houses of Parliament in reply gave out no other note than one of perfect loyalty to the King and a desire to support his wishes, whatever they might be. The minds of the Virginians when these papers reached them were much disturbed, and this in spite of certain private information from London of a willingness on the part of the ministry to change their ground, from a conviction that forcible measures

could not be adequate to the end designed. Washington's stand was already taken. "It is my full intention to devote my life and fortune in the cause we are engaged in, if needful." Reconciliation with the parent country was ardently desired; but it was not to be purchased at the expense of liberty and the sacred compacts of government.

The second Congress was of a less conciliatory mind, for Lexington and Concord had made war inevitable. A motley force, hastily gathered in New England, was holding Gage and his troops in check in Boston, and had assumed the offensive so far as to occupy Bunker Hill. If the struggle was to be continued the other colonies must assist. Congress adopted the army before Boston as its own, and determined to appoint a general. Political considerations were prominent, and Massachusetts yielded to Virginia, the more readily as so able a man could be named. Thomas Johnson of Maryland nominated Washington, after John Adams had pointed him out as a choice grateful to Massachusetts; and upon counting the votes, the vote was found to be unanimous in his favor.

Washington was not a ready writer, much less a ready speaker. A night was allowed to elapse after the result of the ballot was ascertained, before an official announcement of his election was made to Washington. In the evening, he engaged his friend and colleague, Edmund Pendleton, to prepare a few words of acceptance, and the next morning the form of tendering and accepting the appointment was performed. "Though I am truly sensible of the high honor done me, in this appointment, yet I feel great distress, from a consciousness

that my abilities and military experience may not be equal to the extensive and important trust. However, as the Congress desire it, I will enter upon the momentous duty, and exert every power I possess in their service, and for the support of the glorious cause. I beg they will accept my most cordial thanks for this distinguished testimony of their approbation.

"But, lest some unlucky event should happen, unfavorable to my reputation, I beg it may be remembered by every gentleman in the room, that I, this day, declare with the utmost sincerity, I do not think myself equal to the command I am honored with." To prove his sincerity he set aside any wish of profit by receiving a salary, asking that only his reasonable expenses be discharged by the Continent. If the words of this speech are not Washington's own, the sentiments are unmistakably his.

The new responsibilities implied a complete break with his home life. The scene of action was in the far east, and occupied a field and time to which no one could set a limit. Communication would be difficult, perhaps impossible, as it must be conducted by sea and rivers, and Great Britain was assured of a command of these. He therefore set his house in order against a long absence, and sought to provide against every contingency. By the hand of Pendleton he made a will, explaining to his wife that common prudence dictated the necessity of settling his temporal concerns, while it was in his power, and while the mind was calm and undisturbed. He resigned his commands in the various independent companies of Virginia, urging them by no means to relax in their discipline, as there was no

saying their services might not be required. To his brother, John Augustine, he wrote seriously and manfully. "I am embarked on a wide ocean, boundless in its prospect, and in which, perhaps, no safe harbor is to be found." To him he confides his wife. "I shall hope that my friends will visit and endeavor to keep up the spirits of my wife, as much as they can, for my departure will, I know, be a cutting stroke upon her; and on this account alone I have many disagreeable sensations. I hope that you and my sister, although the distance is great, will find so much time this summer as to spend a little of it at Mount Vernon." To his wife, in one of the few letters addressed to her that have escaped destruction, he wrote without reserve, and from the heart. After announcing the determination of Congress he continued:

"You may believe me, my dear Patsy, when I assure you, in the most solemn manner, that, so far from seeking this appointment, I have used every endeavor in my power to avoid it, not only from my unwillingness to part with you and the family, but from a consciousness of its being a trust too great for my capacity, and that I should enjoy more real happiness in one month with you at home, than I have the most distant prospect of finding abroad, if my stay were to be seven times seven years. But as it has been a kind of destiny, that has thrown me upon this service, I shall hope that my undertaking it is designed to answer some good purpose. You might, and I suppose did perceive, from the tenor of my letters, that I was apprehensive I could not avoid this appointment, as I did not pretend to intimate when I should return. That was the case. It

was utterly out of my power to refuse this appointment, without exposing my character to such censures, as would have reflected dishonor upon myself, and given pain to my friends. This I am sure, could not, and ought not, to be pleasing to you, and must have lessened me considerably in my own esteem."

The Congress pledged themselves to sustain Washington with their lives and fortunes. They selected those who were to aid him in the command—not making very wise selections, it must be added. Artemas Ward was named the first of the major-generals, a man of high character, of some repute as a soldier, but beyond the period of enterprising activity. For the second of this rank was taken Charles Lee, an Englishman of much self-advertised renown in military service and travels in foreign lands. He had some merit, but so many affectations as to make it strange his merit should not have been measured before taken at his own word. A gift of making an impression upon others was his main support, and a loud, though somewhat harsh, shouting for liberty gave him a claim to recognition. This claim was further strengthened by the heavy sacrifices he intended to make for the cause if they were partially compensated by direct grants of money. By the side of his Commander-in-chief Lee looked small from the start, but he was at least consistent in pursuing his personal interests, even to overreaching himself.

To another Englishman was given the office of adjutant-general, an important functionary in the disciplining of an army. Of Horatio Gates a few glimpses are caught in the war with the French, and he was known to Washington in that service. His claims to a

high appointment were shadowy, unless a motive other than military be admitted. His character was thought well of among the Virginia delegation, and through their influence he obtained his wish. It was excusable to make some erroneous judgments of persons when every detail of an unusual nature must be met with the material at hand. These errors became more marked as the appointments were made. The number of major-generals was doubled, so as to provide for four. A geographical consideration led to the selection of Philip Schuyler, for he represented a powerful interest in New York, had shown himself capable in many positions, and was expressly recommended for the appointment by the New York congress. So far as personal fitness was concerned no better choice could have been made; so far as factional opposition developed few less fortunate could have been named. It was at once his fortune and his misfortune that he proved his right to the position while never reaping its reward. The fourth of the major-generals was Israel Putnam, of Connecticut. Next to Ward, he could show the best record of actual service, and round his blunt and somewhat uncouth character has gathered a veil of misty legend that has served to hide his very positive limitations, and a weakness that has given color even to charges of disloyalty. Of the four men thus appointed, one was an open adventurer; one had the wish but not the opportunity to be worthy of the highest honors Congress could give; one was too old and conservative to make a successful commander, and one was a man who did fairly well on occasion, held responsible commands without meeting to the full the expectations of his commander. Some

years of actual service were required to demonstrate the decidedly weak character of the appointments.

Of the eight who obtained commissions as brigadier-generals, only one, Richard Montgomery, came from a province outside of New England, and he was destined to meet a noble end early in the war. There was a reasonable plea for thus admitting so many from the east, as the operations of the war with the French had centred in the north, Canada being the objective point. The troops engaged had been raised and officered in New England, and the latest experience of actual campaigning was to be found in that section of America. Further, New York was good Tory land, and the patriots had found it difficult to arouse any real feeling on their side. The mob of New York — meaning that part of the population that lent itself readily to any public demonstration — was ready to shout for the King in the morning, and for Liberty in the afternoon, with no sense of inconsistency. The more southern colonies had had their contests with the Indians, but no service so continuous as to produce exceptional leaders. Thus the choice of so many from New England was defensible.

The names actually taken were selected for much the same reason — service in the past. Unfortunately for such a test, the conditions that prevailed from 1758 to 1762 were not favorable to producing military qualities of a high order. The regulars looked upon the provincials as beneath them in rank, in social qualifications, and in possibilities of service. They could never make arms a profession, and thus they were regarded as accidents, to be tolerated, rather than encouraged. Their leaders were mortified by having their claims on account

of good service passed over, and yet the hardest duties and anxieties of the campaign fell upon them. The sense of discipline was less among the provincials, and their restlessness under the restraints of army life and their many, and sometimes serious, infractions of military rule called down punishments and reprimands held to be far in excess of the offense, not infrequently the unconscious act of a man accustomed to perfect freedom and equality. These surroundings and influences made a poor school for soldiers and officers, and few of the colonial officers attained more than a reputation for mediocre talent.

Yet these were the men now made into brigadier-generals, a rank exercising grave responsibilities. The mere names convey a suggestion of the strength, or want of strength, in these appointments: Seth Pomroy, David Wooster, and Joseph Spencer, of Connecticut; Richard Montgomery, of New York; William Heath and John Thomas, of Massachusetts; John Sullivan, of New Hampshire, and Nathanael Greene, of Rhode Island. Montgomery attained martyrdom. Apart from his name, one only of the list proved worthy — Nathanael Greene. Some were unfortunate, some were able on a small scale, some were very unfit. With such assistants, not one of whom did he know personally in a manner to judge their capacity either to obey or to lead, Washington entered upon his trying duties. John Adams, more ready now than later to admit the better qualities of other men, thought the conduct of Washington was "charming." Leaving his home and retirement, to enter upon a cause where his all was in hazard, and with views noble and disinterested — it made a

pleasing presentation. What could not be seen, and it made a necessary part of the picture, were the errors committed in selecting his agents and assistants.

At the City Tavern was given a supper to Washington on the evening of June 22d, by a small number of the citizens. He had passed the morning in reviewing the city companies, and the troop of light horse accompanied him a part of his journey on the following day. With him were Schuyler and Lee, Mifflin, soon to be appointed quartermaster-general of the army, and Joseph Reed, named as his secretary. Near Trenton they were met by a courier bearing despatches to Congress, containing the news of Bunker Hill. New York welcomed on the same day the Commander-in-chief of the Continental army, and the royal governor, just returning from a mission to England in the interests of the colony. Conferences with the provincial congress, with Wooster, and with Schuyler, did not delay his progress, and on the afternoon of July 2d he reached the camp at Cambridge. The formal ceremony of taking the command of the Continental army was performed on the morning of July 3d.

Who was the man thus honored? Few in the colonies could have answered the question. His name was known to many, his deeds to a few, his personal character to a very small number, not many of whom were outside of Virginia. Some knew of him as a soldier, and on the vaguest of information fell into the plan of making him the general of the army. His personality had made an impression on Congress, and the inner circle of his friends were confident of his ability to do what would fall to his share. Outside of this small body,

ignorance even of the main facts of his career prevailed, and in England the wildest assumptions found believers. The *London Chronicle*, in its wish to enlighten the public, was not more misleading than others, and was really interesting in its effort to conceal its want of knowledge. "General Washington was born at Coventry about the year 1709, his father having settled there from Boston in Lincolnshire, the beginning of Queen Ann's reign. His mother was a niece to the famous General Monk, afterwards Duke of Albemarle. At 18 he began a military life, by entering himself as a private in Wade's troop of horse; he afterwards purchased a cornetcy in the same troop, where he continued to serve till after the late rebellion, when the troop being broke, he went abroad, and at the beginning of the late war was promoted in America, where he served in the capacity of a Colonel with signal courage and fidelity; which so endeared him to that people, that they unanimously chose him to the chief command upon the present contest. Several of his relations now reside at Coventry, and a nephew of his is a member of that corporation."

CHAPTER X

THE CONTINENTAL ARMY

HAVING taken command, Washington issued his first general order: "The Continental Congress, having now taken all the Troops of the several Colonies, which have been raised for the support and defence of the Liberties of America; into their Pay and Service: They are now the Troops of the United Provinces of North America; and it is hoped that all Distinction of Colonies will be laid aside; so that one and the same spirit may animate the whole, and the only Contest be, who shall render, on this great and trying occasion, the most essential Service to the great and common cause in which we are all engaged." The spirit of a united army was to be attained, but how?

The force that was now encamped near Boston had been collected from the New England colonies only, and had been somewhat demoralized by the affair at Bunker Hill. Daring as the venture had been, it was a blunder, and one that might have cost the Americans every man engaged in it. To march into a neck of

land, the only approach to which was commanded from the water; to take no measures to protect this approach, if only to provide for a retreat; to fortify a hill that could have been made untenable by an attack upon the rear, an entirely feasible plan, was to invite defeat and destruction. That this movement should be made by raw troops commanded not by one, but by two or three leaders, acting independently of each other, creates wonder at the rash undertaking, apparently so hopeless from the start. The bravery of the defense, and the tenacity with which the trenches were held until no ammunition remained, could not conceal the fatal weakness of the intention. That some of the officers did not behave in a soldierly manner is small matter for surprise, but the effect was demoralizing on the men. The benefits of the Bunker Hill fight were to give the enemy an impression of strength, to baptize with blood the American force, and to prove what raw materials of an army were present, ready for the man who should command.

To Washington his situation involved difficulties. The Virginia regiment he had commanded was composed of very rough material, but it was held in check by a difference in rank, maintained and established with a view to enforce discipline. In this the rules only followed those of the regular army, and whatever little differences colonial conditions might introduce, the main point was clear — a distinction between the officer and the private. In New England another rule prevailed — that all men were equal; in a pure democracy the officer merely differed in title from the rank and file, and was one of them and one with them in all

things. The uniform could not create a caste, and the order coming from an equal, and in all probability a long-time acquaintance, could not carry the weight of one coming from a higher authority. The officers mixed with the men; they even shared with them in messing, in tenting, and in routine work of camp duty. They were suspected of being unwilling to exert themselves in enforcing orders, currying favor with the men by whom they were chosen and on whose smiles they believed their continuance in office depended. So much ease and freedom were distasteful to the southerner; but it was a condition of which he was not made aware for some time. The crudities of the force struck him from the first, but he looked to the zeal and activity of the officers and the docility and obedience of the men to work a change.

Before attention could be given to the internal organization of the army, its safety from attack must be assured. The British occupied Bunker Hill, and had thrown up strong entrenchments on it, thus commanding the one approach by land to the city. The mixed multitude of Americans were under very little discipline, order, or government, and in situations much exposed to attack. One part was on Winter and Prospect hills, only a little more than a mile away from the enemy; another part was at Cambridge, about five miles from Boston; and a third part was at Roxbury, in a position to watch the movements of the British and to guard the entrance to the town. The three positions were to be held, and required some fortifications; but much more was needed to cut off all communication between Boston and the country, without which the King's troops could

be easily supplied, and able to stand any length of siege. A semicircle of nine miles must be guarded in every part, and by a force no larger than that in Boston. To reduce the prospect of a sortie, Washington established his lines between the Mystic River and Dorchester Point in such a way as to check an advance into the country. The first returns of his strength fell far below his expectations, for all told he was at the head of only fourteen thousand five hundred men fit for duty. Not a regiment was at its full number, and at least twenty-two thousand men would be required to maintain the posts then held and guard lines of so great an extent. Fortunately the English believed the force to be much larger than it was, and by maintaining a bold front this impression was deepened. So much was wanting that the letters of the General partook of the nature of a list. There were no competent engineers to construct proper works; no sufficient quantity of tools was at hand; the number of tents was below what was needed; the army could be well supplied with provisions by a commissary-general, were he substituted for a number of officers acting independently of one another; other officers were required, such as a quartermaster-general, a paymaster-general, a commissary of musters, and a commissary of artillery. The hospital service was of little value. Above these in importance was the need of a military chest. The men were poorly clothed, many of them being almost naked. Recalling his earlier experience, Washington suggested hunting shirts, as cheapest and most easily obtained. There was a political motive: "I know nothing in a speculative view more trivial, yet if put in practice would have

a happier Tendency to unite the men, and abolish those Provincial Distinctions which lead to Jealousy and Dissatisfaction."

The jealousies were not confined to the men, and the appointments of the generals gave rise to no little heartburnings. Pomroy had left the camp, inspired in feeling by some act of the provincial congress. Spencer had also gone, sulking because Putnam had been given a preference. Thomas, an abler man than either, felt sore because he was lower on the list than Heath. The local feeling was too strong to prevent this influence among the higher officers, and when the task of organizing the army in the lower divisions was seriously taken up, the minor officers only imitated their superiors. It was difficult for them to realize that the army was now upon a general establishment, and Congress had unquestioned authority to supersede and control the provincial regulations and appointments. The very idea of colony troops must be abolished; they were to be continental, unhampered by any particular interest. To Thomas, about to retire in a pet, Washington expressed himself freely: "In the usual contests of empire and ambition, the conscience of a soldier has so little share, that he may very properly insist upon his claims of rank, and extend his pretensions even to punctilio; — but in such a cause as this, when the object is neither glory nor extent of territory, but a defense of all that is dear and valuable in private and public life, surely every post ought to be deemed honorable in which a man can serve his country."

Back of the troops was the influence of each colony. The command of the sea gave the English a notable

advantage from the first, in their ability to make descents upon such exposed parts of the coast as promised to supply them with forage and provisions. The mere possibilities of such descents led to requests from the governors for permission to retain at exposed places companies of men, raised for continental purposes. Massachusetts wished a detachment to be sent to protect the eastern part of the colony from the ravages of the enemy, from their plundering cattle, sheep, and wood. Were such a request granted, every town on the coast, equally exposed to a hostile visitation, would have an equal claim to protection. This would divide the army, expose it to destruction in divisions, and accomplish no more than a partial and temporary defense of the coast, as long before the troops could reach the scene of action the enemy would have accomplished his purpose and retired. The inhabitants of Machias wished to undertake an expedition against Nova Scotia; but Washington discouraged it, not only on the ground of the scarcity of supplies, but also because it would be a measure of conquest, not of defense, and might be attended with very dangerous consequences. Wooster at New York was unwilling to despatch three regiments of his command to General Schuyler, and wrote to Washington about it, asking that other companies be sent to him. Very properly the Commander-in-chief refused to interfere, and regretted the delay caused by Wooster's hesitation. To every request for local defense he answered that the local militia must be depended upon, and to do otherwise would invite the destruction of his army and the failure of every general plan. No provincial congress could, with any propriety, interfere with

the disposition of troops on the continental establishment, much less control the orders of any general officer.

To make the army truly continental some of the appointments must be placed outside of New England. Regimental offices were properly due to the colonies in which the regiments were raised; but there were a number of other positions, general and special, which required peculiar fitness and could be given with advantage to the ablest man, irrespective of his province. As the expenses of the war were to be met by all, it was policy to distribute the offices among the different colonies, indiscriminately. To reserve them for a few would inevitably result in creating jealousy, and in the end producing disgust. It was not to be expected that a colony would willingly yield its supposed right to an office, but the difficulty could be met by reserving the appointments to Congress. "I have taken the liberty of suggesting this matter, as I conceive the service will be infinitely promoted thereby; as merit only, without a regard to country, will entitle a man to preferment, when, and so often as, vacancies may happen." He welcomed young Edmund Randolph, coming from Virginia with a letter of recommendation on his merits, and because he "stands unconnected with either of these governments; or with this, that, or t' other man; for between you and me there is more in this than you can easily imagine."

The military problem was clear to Washington's mind. With the force under his command and the recognized deficiencies in ammunition and artillery, how could it be disposed of to the best advantage?

Councillors were many, and Massachusetts was not backward in making recommendations. But the advice was given on a knowledge of only part of the many details to be considered, and it was to be feared the enemy were better informed of what was being done in the camp than was the provincial congress of Massachusetts. To all such advice consideration was given, and with a full knowledge of what must follow its rejection. "I shall be accused of inattention to the public service, and perhaps with want of spirit to prosecute it — but this shall have no effect upon my mind, and I will steadily (as far as my judgment will assist me) pursue such measures as I think most conducive to the interest of the cause, and rest satisfied of any obloquy that shall be thrown, conscious of having discharged my duty to the best of my abilities."

In a moment of depression he took his friend Richard Henry Lee into his confidence, and gave a vent to his feelings. "There has been so many great and capital errors, and abuses to rectify, so many examples to make, and so little inclination in the officers of inferior rank to contribute their aid to accomplish this work, that my life has been nothing else (since I came here) but one continued round of annoyance and fatigue; in short no pecuniary recompense could induce me to undergo what I have, especially as I expect, by shewing so little countenance to irregularities and publick abuses to render myself very obnoxious to a greater part of these people."

A general plan must be pursued, and before the demands of that, all else must give way. To keep Gage cooped up in Boston and shut off his supplies

were still his principal objects. Late in August his lines were pushed forward a little, and a small eminence known as Plowed Hill was occupied, which gave him a better stand, and some anxiety to the enemy. He had hoped to bring on a general engagement, but only gave occasion to a series of cannonades, to which no reply could be made, owing to the scarcity of powder. This had become a supreme problem, and he sent to every colony begging that they would send on all that could be spared, no matter how small the quantity might be.

With a certain confidence in the strength of his position he turned to consider the campaign of Schuyler against Canada. He proposed to detach about one thousand men, to penetrate into Canada, by way of the Kennebec River, and thence to Quebec, creating a diversion that must cost Quebec to the English general in Canada, Guy Carleton, or compel him to march to its defense, and so leave the road to Montreal open for Schuyler's troops. Colonel Benedict Arnold, who had just returned from Ticonderoga in no very kindly frame of mind, was to command, and some of the newly arrived riflemen from Virginia and Pennsylvania were to be with this detachment, as best adapted for the long and trying march through the northern wilderness.

To impose upon the ministerial troops the calamities of a siege was not the limit of Washington's wishes. Why not assume the offensive, and attack the enemy, possibly ending the war by a brilliant stroke? The scheme slowly took form in his mind, and had much to commend it. The winter season was approaching, and the mere cost of clothing the men and obtaining fuel

was to be considered. Unless this detail could be met, what assurance was there the men would again enlist, on the expiration of their present term? To raise, furnish, and equip a new army in the face of the enemy would be a mighty undertaking and would involve dangers almost fatal to the cause. The British were probably aware of this possible complication, and were quietly awaiting this termination to the war. He called his officers in council, and they decided against it, wishing to hear further from England.

The continuance of the army became the important question. The troops of Connecticut and Rhode Island stood engaged to December 1st, and none longer than to January 1st. Unless measures were taken to prevent, the entire army would dissolve during 1775. The general disposition of the men as to extending their service had not been tested. Some discontent was known to exist among the officers as well as among the privates. The former complained of the pay and want of allowances proportionate to their rank. For the men, the question of clothing and blankets was of the highest importance. Before the end of September the position had become serious. "My situation is inexpressibly distressing, to see the winter fast approaching upon a naked army, the time of their service within a few weeks of expiring, and no provision yet made for such important events. Added to these, the military chest is totally exhausted; the paymaster has not a single dollar in hand; the commissary-general assures me he has strained his credit, for the subsistence of the army, to the utmost. The quartermaster-general is precisely in the same situation; and the greater

part of the troops are in a state not far from mutiny, upon the deduction from their stated allowance. I know not to whom I am to impute this failure; but I am of opinion, if the evil is not immediately remedied, and more punctually observed in the future, the army must absolutely break up."

Impressed with these representations, Congress appointed a committee to proceed to camp and confer with Washington and the executives of the New England colonies on the proper and most effectual method of continuing, supporting, and regulating a Continental army. Thomas Lynch of South Carolina and Dr. Franklin were first chosen to serve on this committee, and the balloting for the third member eventually gave Benjamin Harrison, a friend of Washington. Franklin's earlier experience in the French campaign would be invaluable; but it is somewhat remarkable that the majority of the members of the committee should come from the southern colonies. Not a representative of New England was upon it, but this defect was remedied by the presence at Cambridge of representatives of the four eastern colonies. Washington presided over the conferences, and laid before them the formal opinions of his general officers upon the condition and needs of the army.

The new army was to consist of not less than twenty thousand three hundred and seventy-two men, making twenty-six regiments, exclusive of riflemen and artillery. Assuming that the pay remained the same, and the time of service was limited to one year, it was believed that Massachusetts could raise twenty thousand men, Connecticut eight thousand, New Hampshire three

thousand, and Rhode Island fifteen hundred, leaving an ample margin for any extraordinary call rendered necessary by a reinforcement of the British. The existence of such a force, although only on paper as yet, was regarded as a source of confidence in the speedy and successful termination of the war. With this, the functions of the colonial representatives ended; but the committee from Congress remained to consider other matters, such as modifying the articles of war, making regulations for disposing of prizes captured at sea, exchanging prisoners of war, the employment of Indians, and a number of details which required rules and systematic treatment. The face-to-face exchange of suggestion was of advantage, for it led to a rapid determination of doubtful points, and the framing of principles mutually satisfactory and regarded as efficient to secure the end desired. Returning to Philadelphia, the committee presented a report to Congress, and almost all its conclusions were embodied in resolutions and promptly passed. The path of Washington was made smooth, and the recommendations presented carried the weight of his wish and the acceptance of the committee. It was strange that the same expedient was not resorted to more frequently during the contest, for it had every argument in its favor. It is true, the English were mystified. It was believed Congress was exciting Washington to action before winter, or was intent upon reconciling Washington and Lee.

The formation of a new army gave Washington the opportunity he had long wanted of lessening the force of local attachments. The army was to be continental in fact as well as in name, and the relations of officers

and men must suffer in the change, until new attachments could be created. The New Englanders resented this alteration, for it involved the reduction of some regiments and the discharge of their officers, who sought to dissuade their men from again taking service. In this way they hoped to ruin the establishment, and so bring themselves into place again. Nearly one third of the officers were averse to continuing in commission, although the pay had been increased and the conditions improved. In making the new establishment, Washington encountered unexpected obstacles, and was involved in serious perplexities. "Connecticut wants no Massachusetts man in their corps; Massachusetts thinks there is no necessity for a Rhode-Islander to be introduced amongst them; and New Hampshire says, it 's very hard that her valuable and experienced officers (who are willing to serve) should be discarded, because her own regiments, under the new establishment, cannot provide for them." Four days were spent in trying to reconcile claims, quiet jealousies, and reduce the grades to a system. "The trouble I have in the arrangement of the army is really inconceivable. Many of the officers sent in their names to serve, in expectation of promotion; others stood aloof to see what advantage they could make for themselves; whilst a number who had declined, have again sent in their names to serve. So great has the confusion arising from these and many other perplexing circumstances been, that I found it impossible to fix this very interesting business exactly on the plan resolved on in the conference, though I have kept up to the spirit of it, as near as the nature and necessity of the case would admit of." After five

meetings of the general officers, he was obliged to "give in to the humor and whimsies of the people, or get no army."

So many perplexities were to be met, and so many of them were due to influences, unnecessary or improper, that Washington could not conceal his chagrin and real displeasure. "Such a dearth of public spirit and want of virtue, such stock-jobbing, and fertility in all the low arts to obtain advantages of one kind or another, in this great change of military arrangement, I never saw before, and pray God I may never be witness to again. What will be the ultimate end of these manœuvres is beyond my scan. I tremble at the prospect. We have been till this time enlisting about three thousand five hundred men. To engage these I have been obliged to allow furloughs as far as fifty men a regiment, and the officers I am persuaded indulge as many more. The Connecticut troops will not be prevailed upon to stay longer than their term (saving those who have enlisted for the next campaign, and mostly on furlough), and such a dirty, mercenary spirit pervades the whole, that I should not be at all surprised at any disaster that may happen. In short, after the last of this month [November] our lines will be so weakened, that the minute-men and militia must be called in for their defence; these, being under no kind of government themselves, will destroy the little subordination I have been laboring to establish, and run me into one evil whilst I am endeavoring to avoid another; but the lesser must be chosen. Could I have foreseen what I have, and am likely to experience, no consideration upon earth should have induced me to accept the command. A regiment or

any subordinate department would have been accompanied with ten times the satisfaction, and perhaps the honor." This opinion indicated the nervous petulance of a mind beset with anxieties. Greene had seen that Washington had pitched his expectation too high, and was disappointed in finding, not a superior race of mortals, but men of the same temper, prejudices, virtues and vices as were common in other provinces. Lee, ever on the alert for an opportunity to ingratiate himself with Congress, was loud in his praise of the militia. True, a dissatisfied general was persuading the men not to enlist; and the Connecticut men went home in large numbers, but they were hissed and pelted as they passed through the lines.

Militia was ordered in to serve during the change from the old to the new army, adding little strength to the besieging force, and introducing a somewhat demoralizing element. Congress was opposed to offering any bounty, and showed a disposition to adhere to ordinary measures, whereas war required extraordinary powers and expedients. When the English sent a force to North Carolina, Washington, uncertain of its destination and fearing for New York, sent Lee to put the place in a state of defense and disarm the loyalist. The command of the North River and of the communication with Canada was too important to be lightly risked. No part of his own army could be spared for this important mission, for the returns gave a total strength much below what had been feared. Voluntary enlistment had been put to the test and given an approach to failure. By the middle of January only ten thousand five hundred men were on paper, and some of these

were on leave and could not be counted upon with certainty. An order had gone forth peremptorily requiring all officers, under pain of being cashiered, and recruits as being deserters, to join their respective regiments by the end of the month. There was a want of arms, and no means of obtaining them. Money was not in the treasury, the magazines were empty of powder. Tents were still needed and even expresses and engineers were unprovided. Again was he despondent. "The reflection on my situation, and that of this army, produces many an uneasy hour when all around me are wrapped in sleep. Few people know the predicament we are in, on a thousand accounts; fewer still will believe, if any disaster happens to these lines, from what causes it flows. I have often thought how much happier I should have been, if, instead of accepting of a command under such circumstances, I had taken my musket on my shoulder and entered the ranks, or, if I could have justified the measure to posterity and my own conscience, had retired to the back country, and lived in a wigwam. . . . Could I have foreseen the difficulties, which have come upon us; could I have known, that such a backwardness would have been discovered in the old soldiers to the service, all the generals upon earth should not have convinced me of the propriety of delaying an attack upon Boston till this time."

The death of Montgomery and defeat of the continental force in the assault on Quebec imposed the necessity of sending some regiments to Canada, and seemed to place any attack on Boston out of the range of possibility. The very defense of the works depended on the militia. "No man upon earth wishes more

ardently to destroy the nest in Boston, than I do; no person would be willing to go greater lengths than I shall, to accomplish it, if it shall be thought advisable. But if we have neither powder to bombard with, nor ice to pass on, we shall be in no better situation than we have been in all the year; we shall be worse, because their works are stronger." Congress was urging action and criticisms were free on the apparent inaction of the army; but the means of making an attempt were not sent, and the "chimney-corner heroes" abated their zeal in a measure as the deficiencies of the army became better known. So great were the wants, so weak was the line of defense, and so doubtful was the aid to be expected, that Washington concealed the real situation from his own officers.

In February ice formed from Dorchester Point to Boston Neck, and from Roxbury to the common. The enemy were believed to number less than six thousand men, and Washington had a force fit for duty of nearly double that strength and was about to receive more than seven thousand militia. The opportunity of making the assault, so long awaited, seemed at hand; but to his surprise a council of war decided against it, and almost unanimously. With surprise and reluctance Washington submitted to this decision, doubting whether the irksomeness of his position, with the whole continent fixed in anxious expectation of hearing of some great event, had not led him to put more to the hazard than was consistent with prudence or safety. One step was gained. A bombardment should be made as soon as powder was received, and Dorchester Heights should be occupied.

Having determined to occupy Dorchester Heights, the attention of the enemy was diverted by a cannonade from the other posts on March 4th. Under cover of this bombardment Brigadier-General Thomas crossed the Neck with a considerable detachment, took possession of the two hills without the least interruption or annoyance from the enemy, and before morning was secure against their shot. To overlook Boston Nook's Hill was quite as important as the Heights, and the Americans were soon entrenched there, nearer to the enemy than before and in a position to do them great mischief without suffering themselves. This measure was decisive. Washington believed he could so gall and annoy the British that they must either give battle or quit the city, and of this the enemy were convinced as soon as daylight showed the new batteries threatening them. An attack was determined upon and troops were embarked on boats to tempt the strength of the works; but a strong wind came up and for two days prevented their landing at Dorchester, losing all opportunity of success. Had they succeeded in obtaining a foothold, Washington had planned to assault Boston itself, for which he could hold in readiness all his best troops, as militia had been called in to hold the entrenchments. The boisterous weather made the risk unnecessary, and word was received the next day that the English army had accepted the inevitable, and were in great hurry and confusion to get aboard their transports and sail for Halifax.

On Sunday morning, March 17th, the ministerial army left Boston and the town was at once taken possession of by the Americans. Little property was

destroyed or had suffered damage, and so much of the works of defense remained that the retreat was made with the greatest precipitation. Many cannon had been abandoned, and stores to the value of some thirty thousand pounds sterling, a welcome accession to the continental supply. On Monday Washington rode into the abandoned streets and went to the house of John Hancock, where he found the furniture and family pictures uninjured, almost certain proof that nearly the same condition existed elsewhere. For such damage as had been done, Washington refused to permit reprisals; and although it was known that there was much belonging to those who by their going with the enemy's fleet declared their hostility to the continental cause, it was as carefully protected as other property. The loyalists suffered heavily for acting up to their convictions; but it was not through any order of the American General that they lost in material wealth. Even as to captured property he was scrupulously exact. Should vessels and their cargoes originally belonging to Americans, but abandoned by the British at the evacuation, be returned to the first owners, or regarded as prizes of the continent? Should cannon, purchased by the province, but left by the British, be returned to Massachusetts, or looked upon as just prize of war?

For more than a week the fleet remained in the harbor, showing "the best knack at puzzling people I ever met with in my life." They destroyed the castle and burnt the barracks; but in spite of all his efforts, Washington could not fathom their intentions, and feared they intended to give a stroke when he was off his guard, in order to relieve in part the shameful

retreat. The thought caused him anxiety, for the enemy, as they then were, had greater capacity for mischief than on land. They had no posts to guard, and were collected in one body. The American army, on the contrary, was growing weaker. Not only had six regiments been detached to New York, but the militia were about to disband, their time of service having expired. It was with a feeling of relief that he saw the sails spread on March 27th, and the entire fleet stand out for sea.

For eleven months the town had been in English possession, and the necessity for evacuating it caused great astonishment in England. It was equivalent to a defeat, yet the calm announcement of the *Gazette* gave no indication of the gravity of the situation. "His Majesty's forces have embarked from Boston with the greatest order and regularity, and without the least interruption from the rebels." This was the summation of nearly nine months of hostilities, and is in strange contrast with the somewhat jubilant note in Washington's letters. "I have been here months together, with (what will scarcely be believed) not thirty rounds of musket cartridges to a man; and have been obliged to submit to all the insults of the enemy's cannon for want of powder, keeping what little we had for pistol distance. Another thing has been done, which, added to the above, will put it in the power of this army to say, what perhaps no other with justice ever could say. We have maintained our ground against the enemy, under this want of powder, and we have disbanded one army, and recruited another, within musket-shot of two and twenty regiments, the flower of the British army, whilst

our force has been but little if any superior to theirs; and, at last, have beaten them into a shameful and precipitate retreat out of a place the strongest by nature on this continent, and strengthened and fortified at an enormous expense."

CHAPTER XI

TOWARDS INDEPENDENCE

IN reviewing the operations before Boston it is interesting to notice the influences exerted on Washington's mind. He soon imbibed a strong prejudice against the New England soldiery, as well officers as men. For this there was some good reason, as the conduct of certain officers at Bunker Hill was cowardly to a degree, and the independence and feeling of equality of the common soldier were contrary to military discipline, and when permitted to assert themselves were destructive of it. The trouble encountered in re-enlisting the army, and the somewhat sordid features discovered only intensified this prejudice, and led him into utterances which described his passing vexations but did an injustice to the army. In tactics also he came to a hasty conclusion. His officers had discouraged an assault upon Boston, and the only other measure possible was to attain security against a sortie or attack from Boston. Hence the many redoubts, trenches and other defensive works, at which Lee scouted and thought destructive of spirited action. He notes the "fatal persuasion" which

had taken deep root in the minds of the Americans, from the highest to the lowest order, that they were no match for the regulars, but when covered with a wall or breastwork. The failure of Montgomery's men to face fire at Quebec seemed to confirm this persuasion, and was exactly consonant to the opinion Washington had formed. "Place them behind a parapet, a breastwork, stone wall, or any thing that will afford them shelter, and from their knowledge of a firelock, they will give a good account of their enemy; but I am as well convinced, as if I had seen it, that they will not march boldly up to a work, nor stand exposed in a plain."

The evils arising from short enlistments, or for any time short of the duration of the war, were also brought home to him. The calling out of militia had proved very costly, and left nothing permanent of corresponding value. "It takes you two or three months to bring new men in any tolerable degree acquainted with their duty; it takes a longer time to bring a people of the temper and genius of these into such a subordinate way of thinking as is necessary for a soldier. Before this is accomplished, the time approaches for their dismissal, and you are beginning to make interest with them for their continuance for another limited period; in the doing of which you are obliged to relax in your discipline, in order as it were to curry favor with them, by which means the latter part of your time is employed in undoing what the first was accomplishing, and instead of having men always ready to take advantage of circumstances, you must govern your movements by the circumstances of your inlistment." "To expect,

then, the same service from raw and undisciplined recruits, as from veteran soldiers, is to expect what never did and perhaps never will happen. Men, who are familiarized to danger, meet it without shrinking; whereas troops unused to service often apprehend danger where no danger is. Three things prompt men to a regular discharge of their duty in time of action: natural bravery, hope of reward, and fear of punishment. The two first are common to the untutored and the disciplined soldier; but the last most obviously distinguishes the one from the other. A coward, when taught to believe, that, if he breaks his ranks and abandons his colors, [he] will be punished with death by his own party, will take his chance against the enemy; but a man, who thinks little of the one, and is fearful of the other, acts from present feelings, regardless of consequences." His conclusion was that if there should be occasion for troops another year, involving another enlistment, it would be better and less costly to offer a bounty, and to engage the men for and during the war.

The officers were being sifted, and under the test of actual service some were found wanting. Major-General Ward expressed a readiness to retire after the taking of Boston, and his age and service made his wish almost imperative. Brigadier-General Fry, in whose behalf strenuous efforts had been made when the first commissions were distributed, was in no fit condition to remain at the head of a brigade. He was much confined to his room, and felt his declining life. General Spencer had not shown the spirit that was expected of a good commander, and turned too readily to imagining slights upon himself, nursing grievances and formulating

protests. General Wooster's age was a decided objection to his holding so important a command as that of the Canada expedition, and this objection was more than sufficient to offset his really patriotic behavior when he could have raised the question of rank.

Washington's relations with Congress were being defined. That body was by no means so harmonious in view as the printed journals show, and the occasions for differences in connection with the army were many. To plan a campaign, to provide all the necessaries for its performance, and to await patiently the issue in the face of the many unexpected delays and obstacles certain to be encountered, were subjects not suited to the deliberations of a legislative, or even advisory body, composed as it was of delegates from colonies almost strangers to one another, and still without any framework of a confederation. The fact that the army was largely of New England origin was in itself a cause of jealousies, and the creation of a second army — that under Schuyler — also largely from New England, could not lessen the feeling. Questions of command and of bounties, of trade policy and of war conduct, gave rise to debates that did not fail to awaken sectional difference. "It is almost impossible," said John Adams, "to move any thing [in Congress], but you instantly see private friendships and enmities, and provincial views and prejudices intermingle in the consultation."

Washington knew that his acts were freely discussed in and out of Congress, and that he did not escape criticism. From Massachusetts it was said he had neglected to show ceremonious civility to the public men, a neglect that only proved his too great attention to army

matters. The letters written from camp, and often couched in too frank tone, gave offence, and he was held responsible for them. His failure to attack was made the occasion of attack upon him and his fitness to command. Much was made of his known disapproval of the general conduct of the New Englanders, and nothing was deemed too insignificant to be interpreted as best suited the purposes of the critic. "I shall thank you for giving me the opinions of the world," he once wrote to Reed, "upon such points as you know me to be interested in; for, as I have but one capital object in view, I could wish to make my conduct coincide with the wishes of mankind, as far as I can consistently; I mean, without departing from that great line of duty, which though hid under a cloud for some time, from a peculiarity of circumstances, may nevertheless bear a scrutiny." He entertained no wish to stretch his authority, and the comments of members, made indirectly, only brought out admissions that an error may have been made. "If I have done wrong, those members of Congress, who think the matter ought to have been left to them, must consider my proceedings as an error of judgment, and that a measure is not always to be judged of by the event. It is moreover worthy of consideration, that in cases of extreme necessity, nothing but decision can ensure success. . . . However, I am not fond of stretching my powers; and if the Congress will say, 'Thus far and no farther you shall go,' I will promise not to offend whilst I am in their service."

Nor was he inclined to undervalue his success, though some allowance must be made for confidences made to a brother. "I believe I may with great truth affirm,

that no man perhaps since the first institution of armies ever commanded one under more difficult circumstances, than I have done." In his official letters a due share was given to Providence, whose interposing hand he recognized on more than one occasion. With this confidence he showed a sensitiveness to criticism, and a satisfaction at surmounting it. His conduct had been subjected "to interpretations unfavorable to my character, especially by those at a distance, who could not in the smallest degree be acquainted with the springs that govern it. I am happy, however, to find, and to hear from different quarters, that my reputation stands fair, that my conduct hitherto has given universal satisfaction." It was, therefore, with high appreciation, that he heard of the intention of Congress to commemorate the evacuation of Boston by a medal, a token of respect gracefully suggested by John Adams.

Washington was more advanced towards independence than the Congress. Measured as his language was in the early months of his command, and careful as he was to utter little against the King while speaking freely against the ministry, a change set in as the winter moved apace. It was a "diabolical ministry" attempting to enslave the continent; the Canada bill was a "diabolical scheme" of the ministry; and he called out a deserved rebuke from Howe by praising his personal qualities and attainments, while regretting that "the name of Howe, a name so dear to them, should appear at the head of the catalogue of the instruments employed by a wicked ministry" for the destruction of America. He knew the administration would not have gone to extremities unless the people of England were

behind them, and in this he showed greater foresight than those who believed that the ministry could be intimidated into making concessions by arousing public agitation in Great Britain. The King's "most gracious" speech, "full of rancor and resentment against us," and explicitly holding forth "his royal will to be, that vigorous measures must be pursued, to deprive us of our constitutional rights and privileges," only confirmed his view. That speech embodied the ultimatum of British justice, and was sent into the American camp on the very day which gave being to the new army, to celebrate which the union flag had been hoisted in compliment to the united colonies. "With respect to myself," he wrote to Reed, in February, 1776, "I have never entertained an idea of an accommodation, since I heard of the measures which were adopted in consequence of the Bunker's Hill fight. The King's speech has confirmed the sentiments I entertained upon the news of that affair; and, if every man was of my mind, the ministers of Great Britain should know, in a few words, upon what issue the cause should be put. I would not be deceived by artful declarations, nor specious pretences; nor would I be amused by unmeaning propositions; but in open, undisguised, and manly terms proclaim our wrongs, and our resolution to be redressed. I would tell them, that we had borne much, that we had long and ardently sought for reconciliation upon honorable terms, that it had been denied us, that all our attempts after peace had proved abortive, and had been grossly misrepresented, that we had done everything which could be expected from the best of subjects, that the spirit of freedom beat too high in us to submit

to slavery, and that, if nothing else could satisfy a tyrant and his diabolical ministry, we are determined to shake off all connexions with a state so unjust and unnatural. This I would tell them, not under covert, but in words as clear as the sun in its meridian brightness." He now began to speak of the King's troops, believing it idle to keep up the distinction of ministerial.

Joseph Reed had been in Philadelphia for some weeks and was in close touch with the Congress. His letters to Washington spoke of the hesitation of that body to recognize the inevitable, to declare independence. This hesitation had a deeper root, for it had its origin in the colonies. In Virginia, where it would be supposed the fire of patriotism still burned at high heat, Lee found much obstruction and real diffidence. Some of the Committee of Safety were still ardent, but the friends of Washington, like Pendleton and Bland, were full of doubt on the measures to be adopted. Reed reported the same feeling. "It is said the Virginians are so alarmed with the idea of independence, that they have sent Mr. Braxton on purpose to turn the vote of that colony, if any question on that subject should come before Congress." John Adams, first among the zealous, but lacking something in discretion, sought by indirect means to pledge Congress to independence, but found that independency was a hobgoblin of such frightful mien that it was avoided. The middle colonies could speak with no determination, and the idea of a long war was not generally held. Every whisper of accommodation or reconciliation found a strong echo in Congress, and whether it was an irresponsible agent, like Lord Drummond, or agents not yet named, as the

rumors from England created, the public business was obstructed or allowed to pass unregulated. The sending of Silas Deane to Europe to solicit aid of whatever Power could be bribed by the promise of a monopoly of the American trade, was a stride towards independence, but the measure was kept secret, for obvious reasons. It was the timidity of Congress that made itself felt on Washington, and he saw the remedy in again appealing to the people. "I think a change in the American representation necessary; frequent appeals to the people can be attended with no bad, but may have very salutary effects. My countrymen, I know, from their form of government, and steady attachment heretofore to royalty, will come reluctantly into the idea of independence, but time and persecution bring many wonderful things to pass; and by private letters, which I have lately received from Virginia, I find 'Common Sense' is working a wonderful change there in the minds of many men." A majority was not prepared to take this final step, and could have prevented a determination indefinitely had it not been for a further indication of the hostility of the English Parliament against the colonies. An act was passed making American vessels and property subject to capture. Adams rightly called it an act of independence. "It throws thirteen colonies out of the royal protection, levels all distinctions, and makes us independent in spite of our supplications and entreaties." South Carolina was convinced and adopted a constitution, and the example was studied elsewhere. "I have ever thought," Washington wrote to Adams, "and am still of opinion, that no terms of accommodation will be offered by the

British ministry, but such as cannot be accepted by America."

Before waiting for the actual sailing of the fleet Washington prepared to move to New York, the destination of the enemy, he was led to believe. The riflemen were sent forward, under Brigadier-General Heath, and Major-General Putnam was to follow, to command till Washington, assured of Boston's safety, could himself bring the remainder of the army. On April 4th all was in readiness, and he set out for New York, passing through Providence, Norwich, and New London, urging forward the halting divisions of the army, or making provisions for those coming later. He found a few works of defence completed, some more in a very unfinished state, and the regiments much scattered, some on Long Island, some on Staten Island, and others on the mainland. The provincial Congress was in a much divided frame of mind. The warships of the English were still in the harbor, and were obtaining their supplies from the inhabitants of the country, as if no state of war existed. Political prudence might have excused such freedom of intercourse in the past, but the coming of the army and the construction of defensive works set aside the necessity. The General intimated that an immediate and total end must be put to this business, for only the enemy gained by its continuance. While acceding to this proper suggestion, the committee raised a counter intimation, that the military might supersede the civil government, something to be deprecated. "There is nothing that could add more to my happiness," was the reply of Washington, "than to go hand in hand with the civil authority of this, or any

other government, to which it may be my lot to be ordered." Yet he was obliged to add that should the public safety demand it, he would not hesitate to encounter the local convenience of individuals, or even of a whole colony.

His first care was to despatch four of his strongest battalions to Canada, as Congress directed. The more difficult question of drawing the provincial Congress into measures of defense was then present. He intimated that it would be well to concert a plan for calling out the militia, should it become necessary to use them; to establish good lookouts at the entrance of the harbor, and to agree upon signals that might convey intelligence of the appearance and numbers of an enemy. New Jersey was also put in the same train, and the prudence of this provision was made apparent by a new demand for six regiments for the Canadian service. In place of meeting with aid and encouragement from the inhabitants of Canada, the Americans had been deserted, defeated before Quebec, and both whites and Indians were actually taking up arms against them. An absence of judicious measures in dealing with the Canadians was largely responsible for this, and the visit of a committee from the Continental Congress could not recover the lost opportunity. Appealed to for an opinion on the expediency of making greater efforts to conquer Canada, Washington confessed he was at a loss what to advise. To keep New York was of the highest importance, and his force would be insufficient to meet an attack were any more regiments taken from it. There was every probability that the English would send an expedition to Canada as well as to New York, and — New York

was all-important. The opinion, though indefinite as to Canada, was clear as to New York. Through mismanagement and a want of proper preparations, little could be done in Canada, and in a few weeks that country was abandoned by the Americans sent to conquer it by kindness, if possible, by force, if necessary.

The same problems of administration confronted him in New York as in Massachusetts. The regiments were not filled, and arms were wanting. The appointments of the provincial Congress were at times troublesome, at times conflicting with those already made in the army. A change gave rise to complaint, and even mutiny and disbanding of men; the local committee would interfere or the provincial Congress seek to dictate command, urging policy and their authority. While supporting the authority of the Continental Congress, Washington found it wise to yield in some matters. "I have found it of importance and highly expedient to yield many points in fact, without seeming to have done it, and this to avoid bringing on a too frequent discussion of matters which in a political view ought to be kept a little behind the curtain, and not be made too much the subjects of disquisition. Time only can eradicate and overcome customs and prejudices of long standing — they must be got the better of by slow and gradual advances."

Congress was dilatory in taking up the many subjects submitted to it by the General. It was a faulty system that left so much to be acted upon by a body already burdened with momentous questions of state and foreign policy. The details of army management, and the plans of a campaign could have been better arranged by responsible officers under the direction of

Washington. As it was, the officers were not appointed, and the appeals of the commander, increasing in urgency, were referred to committees, and whatever action was recommended passed through the time-consuming debates of the full house, debates that seemed rather to develop points of difference than of agreement. The number of general officers falling so low as to embarrass Washington, Gates was made a Major-General, and was sent to Philadelphia to confer with Congress. This was not entirely satisfactory to that body, as it had already asked Washington himself to attend, and he rather reluctantly prepared to obey the call.

In company with Mrs. Washington he set out for Philadelphia, arriving in that city on the afternoon of Thursday, May 23d. For nearly two weeks he was detained there, consulting daily with a committee of Congress, and obtaining a clearer insight into the weakness of that body, both in its legislative and executive capacities, than he could have derived from any correspondence. Convinced, as he was, that there was nothing to be expected from the justice of Great Britain, he saw the effect produced by the rumored commissioners, as he believed they were intended only to deceive. "Many members of Congress, in short, the representation of whole provinces, are still feeding themselves upon the dainty food of reconciliation; and, though they will not allow, that the expectation of it has any influence upon their judgment, (with respect to their preparations for defence,) it is but too obvious, that it has an operation upon every part of their conduct, and is a clog to their proceedings. It is not in the nature of things to be otherwise; for no man, that entertains a

hope of seeing this dispute speedily and equitably adjusted by commissioners, will go to the same expense and run the same hazards to prepare for the worst event, as he who believes that he must conquer, or submit to unconditional terms, and its concomitants, such as confiscation, hanging, &c."

He received encouragement by the action of his own colony, then engaged in framing a constitution, the form of a new government. South Carolina had already taken this step, but had not declared itself independent of Great Britain. It was a temporary measure, to continue until an accommodation was had with the parent country. North Carolina did not fear to call for independence, if the other colonies should concur. Virginia instructed its delegates in the Continental Congress to propose to that body to declare the colonies "free and independent States, absolved from all allegiance to, or dependence upon, the Crown or Parliament of Great Britain." It was, as Washington said, a noble vote. So outspoken an echo of his own thoughts, for which John Adams was largely responsible, aided him while discussing the almost endless questions on a campaign in Canada. The importance of the conference grew, and the committee was increased in size until it numbered fourteen members. There was now not only the Canadian expedition to be settled, but a plan of military operations for the ensuing campaign. The important feature was reinforcements, and unless recruits could be had it was out of the question to retain what little influence they had in Canada. Indians were to be enrolled, but Schuyler at once raised the point, where were these Indians to be found? It was useless to

expect them to join a cause so weak and sinking as that of America.

Returning to New York he found the defenses were progressing well, but he was met by disastrous news from Canada. Every measure had failed, and not only confusion but complete demoralization had set in. Wooster was recalled, having been condemned as unfit for the command by the committee of Congress. Thomas was down with the smallpox, and Arnold was checked in his efforts to retrieve somewhat the misfortunes by a threatened massacre of prisoners should he proceed. Uncertain pay, a scarcity of provisions, short enlistments leading to restive and half-disciplined regiments, and officers not obtaining the confidence of their men—these were conditions to wreck any expedition, whatever were the odds against it. In this case, the troops were in a hostile country, had met with defeats, were in full retreat, and could not count upon a true support short of Albany. Schuyler was even now denounced by the very men who should have given him full countenance. The best advice Washington could give was to fortify and make secure Ticonderoga and the communicating posts, placing them in charge of judicious and spirited officers, a difficult task, when they were shifting and changing continually.

General Thomas, in many ways the best equipped man for the Canadian campaign under Schuyler, died of the smallpox, at Sorel, on June 2d. Two days later General Sullivan arrived and took the command. His letters were hopeful, and in strange contrast to those of Arnold and to the conditions known to exist in camp. The cause of his tone was attributed to a desire to

command, and Washington was not long in recognizing the intent. Gates had been promoted since Sullivan had left New York, and had as good a claim to a permanent assignment to the northern army. The Commander-in-chief saw the possibility of a clashing of interests, and thought it best to warn Congress. Sullivan was active, zealous in the cause, and of ability. "But he has his wants, and he has his foibles. The latter are manifested in a little tincture of vanity, and in an over-desire of being popular, which now and then leads him into embarrassments. His wants are common to us all — the want of experience to move upon a large scale; for the limited and contracted knowledge, which any of us have in military matters, stands in very little stead, and is greatly overbalanced by sound judgment, and some knowledge of men and books, especially when accompanied by an enterprising genius." The choice fell upon Gates, who was ordered to proceed at once to his new command, from which every despatch brought only discouraging intelligence.

Gates was in high favor with Congress at this time, and John Adams had urged his assignment to the command at Boston, where a well-directed attack by Ward had driven away the British vessels keeping watch at Nantasket Road. The pitiful condition of the army in Canada enforced his going in that direction, to a command that was important, and a service that was difficult but honorable. He had the assurance of the full support of Congress, and his "great ability and virtue," based upon the "great powers" given to the commander in that distant department, were confidently expected to restore order and obtain success in aggression.

Washington saw more clearly the full effects of the series of disasters that had overtaken that army, and urged its retreat. "I fear we must give up all hopes of possessing that country, of such importance in the present controversy, and that our views and utmost exertions must be turned to prevent the incursions of the enemy into our colonies." This was his opinion expressed to Schuyler, and he urged him to use every means to secure and fortify every post and place of importance on the communication. So much had been sent from the main army to the northward, that no efforts could yield either men or supplies. Not even a carpenter could be spared, and without gondolas Arnold could do nothing.

Congress was not so constituted as to conduct a war with certainty or efficiency. The number of its members, the various interests and conditions it represented, and the many personal relations inevitable where appointments and honors are to be distributed, influenced its freedom of action and often controlled its decision by partial agreements and exchange of favors. These conditions made it difficult to give a proper attention to the many matters referred by Washington. To constitute a separate committee on each letter, or on each part of a letter, was an awkward expedient, for the questions were often independent, and to obviate contradictory resolutions should be under the consideration of the same committee. Some of this difficulty could be remedied by having a standing committee on matters relating to the army, and such a measure Washington suggested in January, 1776. A careful consideration of a proposition by a few members of known abilities

was a fitting preparation for a submission of their opinion to the whole Congress. A strong committee composed of seven members was named to consider the propriety of establishing a war office and the powers with which it should be vested. Lynch, of South Carolina, among the first in possessing the confidence of Congress and Washington, was the first on the committee, and with him were associated Harrison, Franklin, Edward Rutledge, Ward, Samuel Adams, and Morris. Three of the committee had been sent to Cambridge in the previous October, and were thus familiar with the necessity for better treatment of army problems than could be given by a full Congress. The committee sat many weeks, and did not report until the middle of April, when no action was taken. In the meanwhile the disastrous situation of the Canadian army called for immediate notice, and the position of the army at New York became daily more difficult. Washington reminded Congress of his recommendation, and insisted anew on the utility and importance of such an establishment. "The more I reflect upon the subject, the more I am convinced of its necessity, and that affairs can never be properly conducted without it."

Congress was taking action on the report of its committee, and adopting its main features. The new Board of War and Ordnance was to be composed of five members of Congress, and to it was assigned the duty of obtaining and preserving an alphabetical register of all the officers in the continental army; of keeping accounts of the military stores, and where lodged or employed; of forwarding despatches and money transmitted for the public service by order of Congress; of

superintending the raising, fitting out and despatching such land forces as were ordered for the service of the United Colonies; and, finally, of caring for prisoners of war, according to the orders and regulations of Congress. Two of the committee who framed these powers were given places on the newly instituted Board—Harrison and Rutledge. The remaining members were new, John Adams, who was chairman, Roger Sherman, and Wilson. This was a decided step towards better things, and was warmly commended by Washington, as an event of great importance. Praise was thus given, though he felt the committee was not perfect, or what the circumstances demanded. No energy of its members, and the activity was certainly great, could overcome the fact that a member of Congress was not a good executive, and five members in consultation could not make good the defect.

Congress and the army formed only a part of his anxiety. New York held a very large and important loyalist element, under the influence of an able and brave governor, William Tryon. By the irony of fate these loyalists were known as the "disaffected," although they were entirely satisfied with the King's rule and looked upon the patriots as the "disaffected." A much stronger term was used to express their regard, and "rebel" in New York meant something that could not resent the insult implied because he had as yet no standing or means of defense. By coquetting with the question, and by recognizing now King, now Parliament, welcoming Tryon and Washington within twenty-four hours with equal enthusiasm, by supplying the King's ships with provisions and denying Schuyler

much that he needed, it was difficult to decide whether the province was loyal or on the side of the rebellion. Washington had early seen that the loyalists could be troublesome and, in sufficient numbers, really dangerous. In November, 1775, after the cruel and unnecessary destruction of Falmouth, he gave orders to seize every officer of government at Portsmouth, who had given proofs of his unfriendly disposition to the continental cause. He recommended the same measure to Governor Trumbull in no mistakable terms. "Would it not be prudent to seize on those Tories, who have been, are, and that we know will be active against us? Why should persons who are preying upon the vitals of the country be suffered to stalk at large, whilst we know they would do us every mischief in their power?"

CHAPTER XII

NEW YORK

NOT without anxiety was the period of preparation brought to an end by intelligence gained from some prisoners taken on British transports. On June 28th Washington learned that the fleet had sailed from Halifax for Sandy Hook, and on the following day the main body arrived. The troops were at once disembarked on Staten Island, in such numbers and condition as to make their influence felt in the town. The good people became dispirited, and the loyalists correspondingly elated. Tryon went to see General Howe, and they were soon agreed that the subjection of New York was a simple matter. The raw militia still formed too large a proportion of the continental army, and the new levies were coming in but slowly. "I could wish General Howe and his armament not to arrive yet," wrote Washington to the President of Congress, as not more than a thousand militia have yet come in, and our whole force, including the troops at all the detached posts, and on board the armed vessels, which are comprehended in our returns, is but

small and inconsiderable, when compared with the extensive lines they are to defend, and, most probably, the army that he brings."

This was a not very hopeful situation, and yet the General felt that the English would strain every nerve during the campaign, for they had a defeat to retrieve. General Howe remembered the lesson he had received, and would not land his men at Gravesend, on Long Island, because of a strong post on a ridge of craggy heights covered with wood, that must be taken before he could move nearer to New York. Staten Island was in itself a shelter to his army, and offered a more convenient centre for action, covering, as it did, access to Long Island, to New Jersey, and to New York. The disaffected from this part of the country could easily gain the island, and might prove a useful body in offensive operations. Washington had given specific orders to have all live-stock driven from the island before the arrival of the enemy, but his orders were not obeyed, and Howe found a welcome supply for his men. He was enabled to await the arrival of the second detachment of his troops and of his brother, Admiral Howe.

To call the new regiments from the New England provinces, to raise the Flying Camp as speedily as possible, and to engage the Indians on the side of the continent, were the urgent necessities of the situation. Flints were much needed; of powder the supply was better; and of lead there had been sufficient taken from the roofs of houses for the whole campaign. Men and arms were the primary wants, for the militia came in slowly, and the new lines even more slowly. New Jersey, exposed as it was to attack, required some companies

of militia, and Boston claimed its force of five regiments for defense, on the plea of a possible landing of the British. To add to the complications, a dispute about rank arose between Schuyler and Gates, the former objecting to take orders from an officer younger than himself, however high his military qualifications might be held. The northern army did not require the presence of two major-generals, for it had retreated to Crown Point and had abandoned all hope of acting on the offensive. Washington, on the other hand, was greatly in need of experienced general officers, and had not been able to give one to Boston or to the Flying Camp, because of the small number available. Appealing to Congress, Schuyler claimed the chief command when the army was this side of Canada, and intimated that he must be superseded if Gates be favored. A disputed command involved evils too great and destructive to permit of any delay in the decision, and a compromise was reached. Congress accepted the position of Schuyler, but recommended the two generals to carry on the military operations with harmony and in such manner as should best promote the public service.

Congress was crystallizing its own opinion, and preparing to recognize the inevitable. That independence could have been declared before the evacuation of Boston by the British, was out of the range of possibility. Two of the colonies might have made an independent declaration, Massachusetts and Virginia, and they might have been joined, with some reluctance, however, by Maryland. The act would have been extreme, and calculated to have shocked the other provinces, producing a reaction in favor of the mother country, and

diminishing the hope of united colonies. The political ties binding America to Great Britain were too strong to be rudely broken, and involved too many interests to be agitated. At length, the action was taken, and on July 6th John Hancock sent a copy of the Declaration of Independence to Washington, informing him of the direction of Congress that it be read to the army. "The Congress, for some time past," he wrote, "have had their attention occupied by one of the most interesting and important subjects, that could possibly come before them or any other assembly of men. Although it is not possible to foresee the consequences of human actions, yet it is, nevertheless, a duty we owe ourselves and posterity, in all our public councils, to decide in the best manner we are able, and to leave the event to that Being who controls both causes and events, to bring about his own determinations. Impressed with this sentiment, and at the same time fully convinced that our affairs may take a more favorable turn, the Congress have judged it necessary to dissolve the connection between Great Britain and the American Colonies, and to declare them free and independent States." On the evening of the 9th, the Declaration was read to the respective brigades, and, Washington reported, "the measure seemed to have their most hearty assent; the expressions and behavior, both of officers and men, testifying their warmest approbation of it." His own opinion, as expressed to Hancock, was but an echo of the words used by the President of Congress. "I trust the late decisive part they have taken is calculated for that end, and will secure us that freedom and those privileges, which have been and are refused us, contrary to

the voice of nature and the British constitution." To his army he was more direct. "The General hopes this important event will serve as a fresh incentive to every officer and soldier, to act with Fidelity and Courage, as knowing that now the peace and safety of his Country depends (under God) solely on the success of our arms: and that he is now in the service of a State possessed of sufficient power to reward his merit, and advance him to the highest honors of a free country."

Nor was it only this formal step towards freedom that called the soldiers to the performance of the noblest exploits and heroism. George III. could not have given a better reason for resistance than in hiring mercenaries from the German princelings. When his agents went further and called in the aid of excited slaves and savages they touched the most sensitive fears of the Americans. All of the colonies had known what an Indian raid meant, and most of them from very recent experience. Those of the south were in perpetual fear of their slaves, and resorted to extraordinary precautions to make an uprising abortive and easily crushed. In self-defense Congress looked to the assistance of some friendly Indians.

General Howe now took the initiative, and sent two ships of war and three tenders past the town of New York into the North River, to obstruct the supplies coming down the river for the continental army. A favoring breeze and a flowing tide aided the movement, and the vessels ran past the batteries without receiving any damage, in the face of a heavy and incessant cannonade. This, as a test of the ability of the works to hold the fleet in check, was a disagreeable surprise to

Washington. He could not know the intention of the English General, and believed he wished to seize the passes in the Highlands, positions of the greatest importance. Warnings were sent to Brigadier-General James Clinton, then in command of these posts, and while despatching them, the booming of guns announced the arrival of the second fleet. Word was soon brought of one vessel flying a St. George's flag at her foretopmast head — the flagship bearing Lord Howe. An attack was only the question of a few days, as the entire fleet must be near at hand, unless the two brothers should act first under their peace commission.

Wishing to anticipate an operation by the British, Washington proposed to make a general attack on the enemy's quarters on Staten Island, but met with a unanimous opinion against it. A partisan descent might alarm the enemy, and, if successful, would encourage his own troops; but an attempt of such a character must await a fitting opportunity for its accomplishment. Seeking to open negotiations with Mr. Washington, the British General received a rebuff. The incident had every appearance of a studied insult to the American commander, for the title to be used was no new matter, having been a matter in dispute during the siege of Boston. "I would not upon any occasion sacrifice essentials to punctilio; but in this instance, the opinion of others concurring with my own, I deemed it a duty to my country and my appointment, to insist upon that respect, which in any other than a public view, I would willingly have waived." Congress approved his action and ordered no letter or message to be received that was not properly directed. When

Howe did succeed in reaching Washington with his message, the answer was conclusive. "He was not vested with any powers on this subject by those from whom he derived his authority and power. But from what had appeared or transpired on this head, Lord Howe and General Howe were only to grant pardons; that those who had committed no fault wanted no pardon, that we were only defending what we deemed our indisputable right." The interview was more polite than interesting, in Howe's opinion, but he altered the superscription of the letter, and so secured the publication of his offer of pardon.

Early in August a number of vessels appeared in the harbor, bringing Clinton and Cornwallis from their unsuccessful attempt against the southern provinces. The Hessians and Highlanders arrived from Newfoundland, making the full strength of the army about thirty thousand men, experienced veterans. The Continental army numbered only 17,225, of whom more than one fifth were sick, and were much divided, over a long line of defense, broken by waters and having some points distant fifteen miles from others. "Under every disadvantage," was Washington's offset to the melancholy recital of his weakness, "my utmost exertions shall be employed to bring about the great end we have in view, and so far as I can judge from the professions and apparent disposition of my troops, I shall have their support. The superiority of the enemy and the expected attack, do not seem to have depressed their spirits. These considerations lead me to think that tho' the appeal may not terminate so happily in our favor as I could wish, yet they will not succeed in their views

without considerable loss. Any advantage they may get, I trust will cost them dear." The temper of some of the people may be judged by the determination of the inhabitants of King's County, on Long Island, not to oppose the British, and by such open disaffection of many prominent citizens of New York that it was thought necessary to deport them.

Militia was hastily summoned from the neighboring regions, useful for harassing the enemy, but not entirely reliable as bulwarks against him. The military papers of the General were secretly sent to a place of safety, and the women, children, and infirm of the city of New York were removed. Arrangements were made to picket the river banks with good marksmen, to move with the ships as they came up the North River. The enemy might land on Long Island, in New Jersey, or directly on New York. Preparations must be made in each place for receiving them, involving an expense of labor that seemed useless after the event. Had military matters only to be arranged, the task would have been comparatively light. The susceptibilities of the timid and lukewarm must be soothed, and the people kept in good spirits. A mere rumor that the city could easily be set on fire should the American army retreat, called out an anxious inquiry from the Convention of New York. Certainly no such rumor originated in any thought of Washington, and he gave full assurances that only the last necessity — one that should justify him to the whole world — would induce him to give such an order.

At last the suspense was ended. On the morning of August 22d a force of the British was landed at Gravesend Bay, upon Long Island, and marched towards New

York. The real weakness of the American lines was shown as soon as put to the test. A few strong redoubts would offer some check to an advancing force, but their ability to do this was lessened by the flimsy construction of the greater part of the defenses, which could not cover or protect their defenders from being forced with comparative ease. The army was, further, much divided, and the duty of defending long and extensive lines, at many different places, without proper conveniences, was so fatiguing that the troops became dispirited by the incessant watching and tense anxiety. Over all hung the fear that the British, commanding the water as they did, could easily cut off retreat to New York, or even retreat to the country above New York. An engagement on the 27th was a partial test, and resulted in a defeat for the Americans, occasioning confusion and discouragement in the camps; and heavy rains for two days not only wore out the men, fully exposed to their force, but damaged the firearms and ammunition. Washington, tireless in his attention to the disposition of the troops, called a council of war on the 29th, and it was unanimously agreed to remove to New York. The retreat was made without any loss of men or ammunition, all the cannon and stores being brought over, and only a few heavy pieces left behind.

The crisis over, a reaction set in, and the army showed its demoralization. The militia, instead of calling forth their best efforts to a brave and manly opposition, showed dismay, became intractable, and were impatient to return to their homes. Great numbers, and in some cases whole regiments or companies, went away, and their example infected another part of

the army, producing an entire disregard of that order and subordination necessary to the well-being of the force. The condition was alarming, and a large portion of the army was dispirited, even despairing. This, too, in the face of a well-appointed enemy, superior in strength to the Americans, and confident by their recent success. As Washington saw his dwindling regiments, and received the proofs of disobedience and refusal of every kind of restraint and government, he admitted: "I am persuaded, and as fully convinced as I am of any one fact that has happened, that our liberties must of necessity be greatly hazarded, if not entirely lost, if their defense is left to any but a permanent standing army; I mean, one to exist during the war." The militia could not be relied upon. "Men, who have been free and subject to no control, cannot be reduced to order in an instant; and the privileges and exemptions, they claim and will have, influence the conduct of others; and the aid derived from them is nearly counterbalanced by the disorder, irregularity, and confusion they occasion."

This situation was producing in him a distrust of his ability to hold New York against the British, something of which he had entertained no doubt. Were the men to do their duty, all would yet be well; but he saw clearly no dependence could be placed upon them, and he so informed the Continental Congress. It would be criminal, he thought, to conceal the truth at so critical a juncture. What must be done with New York? To permit it to stand would give the enemy good winter quarters; to destroy it would involve an incalculable loss. In full confidence of their ability to recover it,

Congress directed that no damage be done to the city, and ordered reinforcements from every state. Had time permitted, the measures might have been effective, but time was the one thing not to be granted. The construction of a strong encampment on the Jersey side of the North River, opposite to Mount Washington, was directed to be done by Brigadier-General Mercer, under urgent orders. And on September 4th, to guard against every contingency, all stores that were unnecessary, or not immediately wanted, were removed above Kingsbridge.

During these anxious days little of importance could be learned of the enemy's movements or intentions. Occasionally a ship would sail past the island, and draw out a harmless cannonade from the shore works. The main part of the fleet was assembling close to Governor's Island, while large encampments were formed on the Sound, convenient to landing to the north of the American forces. A manœuvre of this kind would hem in the army, and cut off all communication with the country. The island of New York could not be held long against such odds, even if the whole army was collected in the city, leaving the country exposed to the enemy's incursions. The hazard of making a successful defense of the city was too great, for it might involve the loss of the army and its stores. Yet to abandon the place, generally supposed to be defensible, and the works on which so much labor had been expended, would tend to dispirit the troops, and enfeeble the cause for which they were contending. Unprepared for a winter campaign the health and comfort of the men must be weighed, and furnished good reason for not putting too much to

the risk. "It was impossible to forget," was Washington's opinion, "what history, our own experience, the advice of our ablest friends in Europe, the fears of the enemy, and even the declarations of Congress, demonstrate, that on our side the war should be defenisve (it has even been called a war of posts), that we should on all occasions avoid a general action, nor put anything to risk, unless compelled by a necessity into which we ought never to be drawn."

A council of war considered the question on September 5th, and determined to recommend half measures. Some of the officers behind Congress wished the city to be maintained at every hazard; admitting at the same time that a bombardment would make it untenable. Unwilling to evacuate the city totally, and fearing to concentrate the entire army in it for defense, the force at hand was arranged in three divisions. One of these, comprising five thousand men, was to remain in the city; a second, composed of nine thousand men, was to be at or near Kingsbridge; and the third was to occupy the intermediate space, to give support wherever it was most required. It was plain the counsel of the timid had prevailed, for every good reason urged a full and immediate abandonment of the city. General Greene recognized the necessity of this, and did not hesitate to call for a "general and speedy retreat," as the honor and interest of America depended upon it. The enemy had such an immense advantage in their fleet while the Americans remained on the island, that they would succeed by weight of numbers wherever they might operate. To remove to the country above Kingsbridge would deprive them of much of this advantage, and

at least keep the army together and reduce the possibility of its destruction, with all its hardly obtained supplies. John Jay pleaded that the retreat be made, and New York laid desolate; but the very word was infected with reproach, and the lame conclusion was adopted by the majority of doing nothing decisive. It was now only a question of time when the British would take possession of the place, for they were evidently intending to winter there. Some delay might be created, but beyond that nothing of moment. The militia melted away from day to day, taking arms and ammunition, so much needed in the camp. To break up the roads leading from Kingsbridge, to urge forward the works on the river, and to watch the movements of the enemy, became the most pressing cares of Washington. Such militia as came, was posted above the Harlem River, more to make a brave appearance of force before the enemy, than to render aid in battle.

Day by day the situation became clearer, and officers who had advised that no retreat be made, came to admit that the position of the army was extremely perilous. The British were intent upon making Washington fight on their own terms, and with the odds almost hopelessly against him. A sufficient number of the general officers induced Washington to call a second council, when a majority of his advisers favored a retreat. Only three members of the conference, Generals Spencer, Clinton, and Heath, were dissenting, and their influence was slight when compared to that on the other side. Preparations were at once made to remove all the stores, and they were conducted under the guns of some English ships-of-war.

Scarcely was the retreat effected, when its wisdom was proved. From the house of Colonel Morris, on the Heights of Harlem, where the island is a little over a mile wide, Washington issued his orders. A part of his force was entrenched in a double line, stretching almost across the island, well prepared for an attack on the front, but much exposed to a flank or rear movement. The English ships sailed up the North and East rivers, and at Montresor's Island, above Hell Gate, they had massed a good number of men. In the early morning of September 15th, they began to clear the ground by a cannonade, and to land troops between Turtle Bay and the city, at a place where slight breastworks had been thrown up to prevent a landing. Upon hearing the firing Washington promptly went to the field and found the troops that had been posted on the lines in full retreat, and two brigades, ordered to support them, flying in every direction. Surprise soon gave place to mortification, and this was increased when, on the appearance of about fifty of the enemy, the Americans ran, leaving Washington on the ground within eighty yards of the enemy, "so vexed at the infamous conduct of the troops, that he sought death rather than life." He exhausted every effort to rally and get them into some order. He drew his sword, and threatened to run them through ; he cocked and snapped his pistols, but without result. The disorder became a rout, and the two brigades went off without firing a shot —"disgraceful and dastardly conduct," was Washington's comment. General Howe was naturally pleased to report to his superiors that he had landed without encountering the "least opposition." For the Americans,

it only remained to retreat, and with no brilliant prospects of making a stand. "We are now encamped with the main body of the army on the Heights of Haerlem, where I should hope the enemy would meet with a defeat in case of an attack, if the generality of our troops would behave with tolerable bravery. But experience, to my extreme affliction, has convinced me that this is rather to be wished for than expected. However, I trust that there are many who will act like men, and show themselves worthy of the blessings of freedom."

The hope was soon fulfilled; for in a skirmish on the 16th, the Americans behaved with bravery and intrepidity, securing some advantage, and fighting well even after their leaders had been shot down.

Criticism from the enemy could easily be endured and answered on a proper occasion. The criticism of friends, often made indirectly and in the formality of a resolution of a convention or legislation, was more difficult to bear, and the motives more obscure. The head of the army was quick to realize the defects of its organization, and had been free in suggesting changes and new methods. Using such instruments as were at hand, he had sought to lay the foundations of a permanent army, bound together by that confidence and intimacy which could alone give it consistency. These instruments were imperfect; Congress acted haltingly on his recommendations, and often gave a half-measure which could not cure the defect; and the States fell far short of what was expected of them. Criticism from a member of a legislature or of Congress carried weight, and the most obvious retort, that he was in great, perhaps

in greater, part responsible for the existing conditions, could not be given. John Adams, returning from his conference with General Howe, saw straggling soldiers on the road, and many loitering in the public-houses. He conceived there was a want of discipline, and, instead of laying the blame on the militia, sought to charge it to the general officers. Returning to Congress he framed a resolution imposing upon those overworked officers positive orders to inure the men to the most exemplary discipline. This well meant but officious instruction was sent to the General, already burdened with cares and much indisposed through worry.

The trouble was too deep-seated to be covered by such a resolution. Had the men in the first weeks of the contest, when under the fervor of irritation and inflamed passions, been engaged for the war, much of the difficulty since encountered would have been obviated. As the months passed without bringing the prospect of a termination nearer, their ardor had cooled, and both officers and men reasoned on their attitude. Interest made itself felt. "After the first emotions are over, to expect among such people as compose the bulk of an army, that they are influenced by any other principles than those of interest, is to look for what never did, and I fear never will happen; the Congress will deceive themselves, therefore, if they expect it. . . . The few, therefore, who act upon principles of disinterestedness, comparatively speaking, are no more than a drop in the ocean." To obtain men a liberal bounty must be paid; to secure good officers, reasonable pay and a permanent footing must be offered. Something was due to the man who abandoned the

sweets of domestic enjoyments to risk his health, much more his life, in the cause. He should at least be independent of everybody but the State he served, and not be driven by a scanty pittance to low and dirty arts, or to filch from the public to make good his necessities.

Quite as essential was a change in the manner of selecting officers. Character, not popularity, should count. The offer of a bounty in money, a suit of clothes, and some public land to every man enlisting would interfere in a measure with the ability of an officer to obtain recruits through personal favor or influence. "While the only merit an officer possesses is his ability to raise men, while those men consider and treat him as an equal, and, in the character of an officer, regard him no more than a broomstick, being mixed together as one common herd, no order nor discipline can prevail; nor will the officer ever meet with that respect which is essentially necessary to due subordination." This might have been written in the summer of 1775, for in more than a year Congress had taken no effective step towards consolidating the army into a compact whole. Joseph Reed, about to resign his position as Adjutant-General, was baffled by the spirit of equality which prevailed between officers and men. An attempt to introduce discipline only made the officer odious and detestable. Militia gave too mixed a force to be readily assimilated, and too independent a body to be brought easily to recognize the need of subordination. "Relaxed and as unfit as our rules and regulations of war are for the government of an army, the militia (those properly so called, for of these we have two sorts, the six-months' men, and those sent in as a temporary aid)

do not think themselves subject to them, and therefore take liberties, which the soldier is punished for. This creates jealousy; jealousy begets dissatisfaction; and these by degrees ripen into mutiny, keeping the whole army in a confused and disordered state, rendering the time of those, who wish to see regularity and good order prevail, more unhappy than words can describe."

The expense of militia was far more than that of a standing army, and would alone condemn a resort to it. The dangers to be apprehended from a standing force were too remote to be dreaded; but the consequences of wanting an army were certain and inevitable ruin. "If I was called upon to declare upon oath, whether the militia have been most serviceable or hurtful upon the whole, I would subscribe to the latter. I do not mean by this, however, to arraign the conduct of Congress; in so doing I should equally condemn my own measures, if I did not my own judgment; but experience, which is the best criterion to work by, so fully, clearly, and decisively reprobates the practice of trusting to militia, that no man, who regards order, regularity, and economy, or who has any regard for his own honor, character, or peace of mind, will risk them upon this issue."

If Congress had intended to put him on the defensive, no more effective method could have been taken. To criticise the outward appearance of the army was to imply that the officers were neglectful of their duty; and for the conduct of the officers Washington was responsible. The slight was set aside in his reply to Congress, and he once more urged the reforms needed for constituting a new army. To his kinsman, Lund Washington,

he showed how deeply the criticism had been felt. "Such is my situation that if I were to wish the bitterest curse to an enemy on this side of the grave, I should put him in my stead with my feelings; and yet I do not know what plan of conduct to pursue. I see the impossibility of serving with reputation, or doing any essential service to the cause by continuing in command, and yet I am told that if I quit the command inevitable ruin will follow from the distraction that will ensue. In confidence I tell you that I never was in such an unhappy, divided state since I was born. To lose all comfort and happiness on the one hand, whilst I am fully persuaded that under such a system of management as has been adopted, I cannot have the least chance for reputation, nor those allowances made which the nature of the case requires; and to be told, on the other, that if I leave the service all will be lost, is, at the same time that I am bereft of every peaceful moment, distressing to a degree."

While speaking of his personal responsibility, there was nothing of this bitterness in his reply to Congress, and he carefully avoided any reproach on that body. "An army formed of good officers moves like clockwork; but there is no situation upon earth less enviable, nor more distressing, than that person's, who is at the head of troops which are regardless of order and discipline, and who are unprovided with almost every necessary. In a word, the difficulties, which have for ever surrounded me since I have been in the service, and kept my mind constantly upon the stretch, the wounds, which my feelings as an officer have received by a thousand things, which have happened contrary to

my expectation and wishes; the effect of my own conduct, and present appearances of things, so little pleasing to myself, as to render it a matter of no surprise to me if I should stand capitally censured by Congress; added to a consciousness of my inability to govern an army composed of such discordant parts, and under such a variety of intricate and perplexing circumstances; — induces not only a belief, but a thorough conviction in my mind, that it will be impossible, unless there is a thorough change in our military system, for me to conduct matters in such a manner as to give satisfaction to the public, which is all the recompense I aim at, or ever wished for."

CHAPTER XIII

TRENTON

GRANTED and granting a long respite from hostilities, the English once more took the initiative. Crossing over to the Jerseys they readily captured Perth Amboy, and gave occasion to a belief that Philadelphia was their object. With ready money and promises they raised loyalist corps both in the Jerseys and Connecticut. Long Island, being completely under their control, had no alternative; the inhabitants were invited to be enrolled, and should they hold back, a draft was to be enforced. Even from Westchester county recruits came in such numbers as to attract the attention of Washington, who sought to check this movement, denouncing the "parricides." Should a reverse come to the Continental arms this process of forming a loyal American army would be accelerated, whereas it would mean ruin to the Continental cause. Such was the distrust and jealousy of the military power in Congress and the States, that the commander was hampered. While De Lancey could promise rank and rewards to such as came to him, it

was beyond the power of Washington, even by recommendation, to give the least assurances of reward for the most essential services.

A new embarrassment presented itself. Silas Deane had been sent to Europe to offer the commerce of the English colonies of America to any power that would give aid in men, money, or military stores. In France he met with such a degree of encouragement as to attract the attention of men of military tastes and experience, good and indifferent. The adventurer, puffing his own titles gained in his short and rather ornamental service, came forward more readily than those whose merits had secured to them high positions in the French army. With very undefined authority, and with too great an eagerness to obtain those skilled in war under the belief that such were wanted in America, Deane was imposed upon, and granted letters of recommendation to men who had no claim to any position, however low, in the service. To Congress these imported officers presented their recommendations, and from Congress they asked the highest offices in the army, asserting claims which if valid would have assured them a position in Europe beyond any temptation offered by colonial or foreign service. Congress weakly gave them commissions and sent them to headquarters for employment.

The rules of ordinary hospitality would not avail to dispose of them. They appeared to be "genteel and sensible men," but did not speak the language. Strangers to the country and the people, no State would find a place for them in the new battalions, unless specially directed to do so by Congress. An interference in the

appointment of officers, after ceding the whole subject to the States, would be fruitful of distrust and jealousy. Washington had no places at his disposal, yet they must be provided for, or linger idle in the camp, an obstruction to the making of the new army. A separate corps, to be increased as other foreigners presented themselves, was suggested, but it was a suggestion that could not bear fruit. Meanwhile the strangers continued to come, and, amazed at some of the positions granted to men who had been their inferiors in the French service, grew importunate in their demands, claiming the highest rank, with the alternative of returning to Europe to spread their grievance to the possible discouragement of real assistance to the American cause. Congress was too lavish in its distribution of commissions, and it was on Washington that the resulting embarrassments fell.

With the British holding the river on the west and having a large force at Frog's Point in their rear, the Americans must again move their position or fight at such a disadvantage as to make the issue certain. The general officers, Clinton alone opposing, in council and after long debate decided to retreat, leaving a garrison at Fort Washington. This took the entire American force, except the regiments left in the fort garrison, from the island of New York. So far from giving stability, it gave the enemy the suggestion required, and from October 22d to November 6th hardly a day passed without some skirmish. Kingsbridge was occupied by the English, and General Greene, at Fort Lee, lately known as Fort Constitution, was threatened with an assault. Uncertain of the final object of Howe's

movements, Washington believed the Jerseys to be the most probable, and arranged his force so as to permit a strong detachment to be sent across the river, while a second body was to defend the Highlands. All doubt was solved when Fort Washington became the centre of operations.

To Washington, conscious of the weakness of his position from want of men to defend many stations or long lines of defense, the retention of the redoubts was not all-important. The militia was dwindling away daily, and no steps had been taken to raise the new army. As yet the new force was on paper only, and there was a vast difference between voting of battalions and raising of men. The necessity for keeping what army existed was imperative, but to divide it into garrisons, and coop them up in detached and separate positions, however well fortified, was to invite disaster. Position after position was abandoned in accordance with this theory, and Fort Washington was the only post of importance retained. The expediency of holding it, were the enemy to possess the surrounding country and enjoy free passage of the river, was questioned by Washington, and he suggested to Greene, then in command, to remove the men and stores, leaving the matter to his judgment. The confidence of Greene overpersuaded him, and he did not enjoin the evacuation of the place, as he really wished to do. A few days later he saw it attacked and captured by the British forces, chiefly the Hessians, and knew that his army was smaller by two thousand trained soldiers, with all the guns and stores in the fort. Without expressing his chagrin or seeking in any way to shift

the responsibility for the loss, he informed Congress. It was to maintain a passage of the river that the place was held, he said, an object of so much consequence that he thought no pains or expense too great for that purpose. His plan had failed, and he could not forbear showing his feelings to his brother. "This is a most unfortunate affair, and has given me great mortification." Yet Congress was fully as responsible, if not more so, for the result, as General Greene or Washington himself. For it had ordered him to effectually obstruct, by every art and at whatever expense, the navigation of the river at that point, and it was in pursuance of that direction that the fort was maintained until it was too late to retreat or to succor the garrison. Fort Lee, by the loss of Fort Washington, became of no importance, and was abandoned, much of the stores being taken to the interior towns, but many guns falling into the possession of the enemy. So small was the Continental army in New Jersey that no resistance could be offered. The militia faded away daily, and the new and raw levies came in slowly. Washington could only retreat, and every mile thus taken increased the despondency of the soldiers and the disaffection of the inhabitants.

From a military point of view the situation offered little reason for hope. The tents and baggage of the army had been lost, and the cold weather was at hand. The country was almost a dead level, but there was not an entrenching tool to be had. A wide expanse of rich country was exposed to the ravages of the enemy, offering him the supplies which would enable him to hold all his conquests. The very aspect of the land changed the

conditions of the campaign, and exposed the weakness of the Americans in field artillery. In the broken ground near New York this want had not been greatly felt, but it now became a crying need. Without it, a defensive plan of operations would be difficult; one of offense, impossible. A train of artillery could not be made in America, but must be procured from France or Holland, and at what delay! "I have resolved to avoid any attack," Washington announced to his generals, and it was a full confession of weakness. Calling upon Lee to join him in the Jerseys, he sought to gather a force sufficiently large to check the predatory excursions of the enemy, and to produce political effects in the country of Jersey and Pennsylvania. An appearance of force might accomplish both objects, but even with Lee's brigade, the entire army would be inferior to that of the English.

Lee was developing an independent judgment. Whatever his real abilities as a strategist were,— and they were never really put to the test,— he was wanting in that prime quality of obedience to orders. To Washington's suggestions he returned some of his own, designed to keep him on the New York side of the river and in an independent command. He hesitated to comply, and ordered Heath to send two thousand of the men of his command, an order properly disregarded, as contrary to Washington's express instructions to Heath. He had assiduously cultivated favor with Congress and the State assemblies, and his assertiveness had given him a reputation for directness and positive strength of purpose. After the fall of Fort Lee, Reed wrote him a very injudicious letter, commenting on the "indecisive

mind" of Washington, and indirectly praising Lee for the opposite quality. The flattery was taken in good part, and in his reply Lee confessed that he really thought his chief would do better with him than without him. The letter came at a time when Reed was absent in Burlington, to be opened and read by Washington with feelings more of pain than of suspicion.

Although the directions for Lee to cross the river were sent on November 21st, a full week passed before he moved. The English were in a position to interfere with his march through the Jerseys, and what would have been a simple matter at the first, now became a source of great anxiety to Washington. From Hackensack to Newark, and from Newark to Brunswick, so closely followed by the English that their van entered Newark as the American rear-guard was leaving it, Washington led his small force. Substantial aid could hardly be expected from the counties in the possession of the enemy; it was difficult to obtain information of Howe's movements. It could not be known that he had no intention of marching to Philadelphia, content with gaining a footing in New Jersey, where he could quarter a large body of troops for the winter, and obtain shelter, forage, and fresh provisions. In truth, he looked upon the campaign as closed.

Howe slowly pushed Washington back, until he had placed him on the west side of the Delaware. Here a stand might have been made, had not two brigades left the army at Brunswick, a loss which compelled a further retreat, and a most urgent appeal to Lee to hasten his march. From the letters of that erratic man Washington believed he had crossed the North River on the

26th of November; but in reality the crossing was not made until December 2d, with nearly a week's precious time wasted to no purpose. Daily expresses had been sent to him from headquarters, but no reply had been received, and his plans and movements were unknown to Congress as well as to Washington. St. Clair had joined him, and yet he applied for instructions to govern his march, still wishing to take a part of Heath's command with him. Washington rather curtly told him not to bring any of Heath's men, and to direct his march according to circumstances, of which he must be the judge. Stirling was at Princeton, directing the removal of stores and baggage across the Delaware, and Washington was at Trenton, only awaiting the time when he would be strong enough in men to turn back and seek to check the enemy's advance. From the time he had turned his back on New York he had been frustrated at every turn that promised advantage, by the error of short enlistments. He saw an opportunity of giving the enemy a setback at every river he had crossed, but never had he possessed an army of sufficient strength. Once more he gave to Congress his warning:

"My first wish is, that Congress may be convinced of the impropriety of relying upon the militia, and of the necessity of raising a larger standing army, than what they have voted. The saving in the article of stores, provisions, and in a thousand other things, by having nothing to do with militia unless in cases of extraordinary exigency, and such as could not be expected in the common course of events, would amply support a large army, which, well officered, would be daily

improving, instead of continuing a destructive, expensive, and disorderly mob. I am clear in the opinion, that if forty thousand men had been kept in constant pay since the first commencement of hostilities, and the militia had been excused from doing duty during that period, the Continent would have saved money. When I reflect on the losses we have sustained for want of good troops, the certainty of this is placed beyond a doubt in my mind. In such a case, the militia, who have been harassed and tried by repeated calls upon them, and farming and manufactures in a manner suspended, would, upon any pressing emergency, have run with alacrity to arms ; whereas, the cry now is, 'they may be as well ruined in one way as another'; and with difficulty they are obtained. I mention these things to show, that, in my opinion, if any dependence is placed in the militia another year, Congress will be deceived. When danger is a little removed from them, they will not turn out at all. When it comes home to them, the well-affected instead of flying to arms to defend themselves, are busily employed in removing their families and effects, whilst the disaffected are concerting measures to make their submission, and spread terror and dismay all around, to induce others to follow their example. Daily experience and abundant proofs warrant this information."

So far had the British advanced into New Jersey that some of their parties were beyond Brunswick. It was thought a fitting time to advertise the fact that the Howes were commissioned to grant the King's pardon to such as would, within sixty days, declare that they would remain in peaceful obedience to him, without

taking up arms or encouraging those who should be in arms against him. So favorable an offer attracted many who saw a protection to themselves and property in the declaration, as well as many who were at heart inclined to the King's cause, but had been prevented from taking their stand openly through fear of persecution. Wherever the King's flag went, numbers of the inhabitants flocked to it, and found interest in declaring their allegiance and selling their supplies for what had become a rarity — gold and silver coin.

Congress itself did not escape the infection of fear that prevailed through the city. Mifflin had been for some time present to further the recruiting service, and when Putnam took command martial law was established. As the reports of the English advance grew in moment Congress began to show a nervous activity that was more demonstrative of timidity than of strength. Military orders were passed; a day of fasting and humiliation was appointed; all civil and military officers were recommended to exercise repentance and reformation, and to observe strictly the articles of war, and particularly those forbidding swearing and all immorality. While Putnam was directed to defend the city to the utmost extremity, the army stores were ordered to be removed. Behind the bold front was the fearful apprehension. The feeling culminated in a resolution that was as puerile as it was dangerous, a resolution that was sent at once to Washington. "Whereas a false and malicious report has been spread by the enemies of America"—it began in sounding phrase, and continued—"that the Congress was about to disperse," it desired Washington to contradict this scandalous report,

and asserted an intention not to adjourn from Philadelphia, unless the last necessity should direct such a step.

The General must have read the resolve with a smile, but he solemnly argued with Congress on its inexpediency. "As the publication of their resolve, in my opinion, will not lead to any good end, but, on the contrary, may be attended with some bad consequences, I shall take the liberty to decline inserting it in this day's orders. I am persuaded, if the subject is taken up and reconsidered, that Congress will concur with me in sentiment. I doubt not, but there are some, who have propagated the report; but what if they have? Their remaining in or leaving Philadelphia must be governed by circumstances and events. If their departure should become necessary, it will be right; on the other hand, if there should be a necessity for it, they will remain, and their continuance will show the report to be the production of calumny and falsehood." Fortunate it was that Congress had so wise an adviser, as they almost immediately adjourned to meet at Baltimore. Before separating, they conferred on Washington full power to order and direct all things relative to the operations of war.

From the inhabitants of Jersey little could be expected, as they were terrorized by the presence of the British. In the retreat of the American force it had been joined by hardly one hundred men. Pennsylvania, outside of the city of Philadelphia, felt the influence of the English, and from disaffection would render no aid to the Continental army. Whatever reinforcements were to be counted upon, must come from elsewhere. Lee was still hovering on the rear of the

British, in command of four thousand troops so urgently needed by Washington. Some militia came up from Philadelphia, and with the force at hand every ford of the Delaware that could be used by the English was guarded. Gates was on his way with seven regiments, and even Heath was bringing his division, until countermanded. While thus straining every effort to concentrate his forces, a letter was received from Lee asking what route he should take, a question that savored of insolence, for it had already been answered in full. Again did Washington mark out the course, begging and entreating Lee to come without delay, and laying stress upon the service he might render by a prompt junction with the main army. At this very time Lee was writing to Gates of Washington in slighting terms. "*Entre nous*, a certain great man is most damnably deficient. He has thrown me into a situation where I have my choice of difficulties. If I stay in this Province, I risk myself and army; and if I do not stay, the Province is lost forever. Our counsels have been weak to the last degree." On the same day Lee was captured by the British.

It was now the middle of November, and the severity of the weather induced the English to go into winter quarters. Their movements seemed at first to indicate a feint or a real retreat, and led Washington to conceive that some stroke might yet be given. That Howe would remain quietly or long in quarters, and permit a new army to be formed during the winter, was beyond his calculations. He was strenuous in his appeals to the neighboring States for immediate aid, and pleaded with Congress for a larger army in the near

future,—one that could cope with Howe as soon as he should move in the spring. What little expectation could be entertained of a present opening was proved by the nearly naked condition of his troops. A collection of old clothes was a welcome accession of comfort, and voluntary gifts of blankets staved off a military requisition. Had Howe been able to cross the river, nothing could have prevented the fall of Philadelphia. The whole country was making its peace with the British, and recruiting officers found their efforts without avail. Washington denounced the conduct of New Jersey as most infamous, and wrote his brother, the "game is pretty near up," adding: "You can form no idea of the perplexity of my situation. No man, I believe, ever had a greater choice of difficulties, and less means to extricate himself from them. However, under a full persuasion of the justice of our cause, I cannot entertain an idea that it will finally sink, tho' it may remain for some time under a cloud."

Two circumstances contributed to produce this situation: the first was paper money, and the second, parties in Congress.

Beginning as a mere advisory body, Congress possessed no funds of its own, and met its expenses by grants from the colonies for the members and by loans of individuals, advanced for small amounts. When the army was assumed, the expense became a Continental one, and Congress created a Continental credit, after the fashion of the day, by issuing bills of credit, which were to be paid off eventually by taxes levied by each colony, in proportion to its population. These notes passed at their face value and were readily accepted for provi-

sions and army needs in New England and the middle colonies. Depending for their value upon the success of the American cause, they would reflect any threatened collapse and could not circulate where the British had secured a foothold. As the larger part of the issues was in circulation in the middle colonies or States, Howe's advance into New Jersey destroyed its value and reduced it almost to waste paper. At this time it was not so much the amount in circulation that affected its value, as the political feature that made it no money in competition with British gold. When it was seen how easily its value was destroyed by the enemy's success, the whole issue fell into disfavor, and no threats of Congress or local committees could force its acceptance at the face value. Washington was shocked to discover that John Dickinson had written his brother to accept no more Continental money in payment of bonds or mortgages; yet the same feeling was met throughout New Jersey and Pennsylvania. Of no avail was it to offer this discredited paper for bounties, wages, or commodities, and this fact was sufficient to paralyze the activity of the army and to compel a resort to force and military requisition.

Congress was dividing into parties, and the special demands of each State were slowly taking form and leading to combinations wherever a mutual interest was to be found. The earlier antagonisms had rested upon commercial questions, upon points raised by the policy of the association, involving a complete or partial cessation of imports or exports. The English edicts and fleet had made foreign commerce too precarious to be of great moment, and, thrown back on themselves, the

States found an outlet for their restless political activity in the framing of constitutions and in local elections of State officers. Only the beginnings of differences were now to be noticed, yet they were of a tendency to excite apprehensions. The democracy of New England was pitted against the South even then, and the commercial power of Pennsylvania constituted an object of jealousy to less favored States. Congress could only reflect any compromise arrived at, and no one could say at what cost the compromise was obtained. When so necessary and apparently simple a measure as the rules of war had been the object of long and bitter debate, and had been carried only with the greatest difficulty, a matter of policy, foreign or domestic, touching the interests of the States in different ways, could block the action of Congress for weeks, and result in no action or in a measure that offered no good solution of the difficulties.

The disadvantages of this situation bore heavily upon Washington, for he could not know of the hidden streams of energy that were daily becoming stronger in Congress, and could not make allowances. Nor would any explanation excuse the open neglect of providing liberally for the new army. The task of referring every matter to Congress embarrassed the Commander; he was more embarrassed by the inevitable delay in passing upon them; and his perplexities were insoluble when a decision was made that was palpably contrary to the public interests. A dictatorship was the simplest arrangement, and before knowing that Congress had given him very much wider powers, Washington suggested that he be allowed greater freedom of action. "It may be said, that this is an application for powers

that are too dangerous to be entrusted. I can only add, that desperate diseases require desperate remedies; and I with truth declare, that I have no lust after power, but I wish with as much fervency as any man upon this wide-extended continent for an opportunity of turning the sword into the ploughshare. But my feelings as an officer and a man, have been such as to force me to say that no person ever had a greater choice of difficulties to contend with than I have." Recruiting was at a standstill. The character of the officers did not inspire confidence. "That fatal vote of Congress respecting the appointment of new officers has put the recruiting business upon such a footing, and introduced so much confusion into the old regiments, that I see no chance of raising men out of them." When the militia service of six weeks gave a bounty of ten dollars, the longer term offered by the recruiting officer contained no temptation. The responsibility for this situation clearly lay at the door of Congress, for the General had many times warned it of the necessity for action, and had pointed out the proper course to pursue. A change had been wrought in the spirit of the army. "I have labored, ever since I have been in the service, to discourage all kinds of local attachments and distinctions of country, denominating the whole by the greater name of American, but I have found it impossible to overcome prejudices." So much had been done in this direction that he was gratified; but in Congress this evil of local interests was taking head.

On December 20th General Gates, with four eastern regiments, and General Sullivan, with Lee's command, came into camp. In ten days the time of service of

nearly all the northern regiments would expire, and the army would be composed of a few southern regiments almost reduced to nothing by sickness and fatigue. Howe was waiting for this dissolution of the Continental forces, or for ice to make the river passable. Washington's pleading for men became painful in its intensity, and was directed to local committees as well as State executives. "I entreat you, collect every man you possibly can." From entreaties the passage was easy to threats. "Those who are so far lost to a love of their country as to refuse to lend a hand to its support at this critical time, may depend upon being treated as their baseness and want of public spirit will most justly deserve."

A stroke at the enemy would be followed by many happy consequences. The political results would be even more important than the military. It would arouse the States from their lethargy; it would give a value to the Continental money; it would further the recruiting of the new army; and would spread a confidence in soldier as well as in civilian. To attain such an effect a great risk might well be taken, and Washington saw his opportunity. The long line of the British invited attack, and Trenton was especially exposed. From reports it was learned that the Hessian commander of the post, Rall, was overconfident, and careless in his guard; inclined to spend his evenings in carousing, and to look upon parade as an equivalent for discipline. In marked contrast was the care with which Washington made the dispositions of his force, providing for every contingency but political ambition and a disinclination to face the most inclement conditions. Gates rode off to wait upon

Congress at Baltimore, and others were turned back at the river's bank by the great storm that raged. Washington, ably seconded by Greene, accomplished the passage on the night of the 25th, surprised the enemy in the early morning, and after a short struggle captured more than nine hundred, with arms, standards, and artillery. "Necessity, dire necessity," he had written to Reed, "will, nay must, justify any attempt." Without the loss of a man a brilliant victory had been gained, and one that must go far towards justifying the claims of Washington to be regarded as a good strategist. It was a stroke that could have been followed up, had it not been for the distressed condition of the troops, but it was thought more prudent to recross the river the same evening, with the prisoners and artillery taken.

In this test the men had proved their quality and their confidence in their leaders. Greene was eager to push on, and Knox gave reasons for so doing. Washington summoned a council, and the plan was set aside, but only for a few days. General Cadwalader had crossed, and finding the road open had marched to Bordentown, suggesting another stroke. On the 29th Washington again made a painful passage to the enemy's country, to "try to beat up more of their quarters." The British had drawn in some of their outposts, but intelligence was not freely given, and Washington found it difficult to obtain this most necessary item of a campaign. The service of the privates about to expire must be purchased at any cost, and for a continuance of six weeks a bounty of ten dollars for every man engaging was promised. There was no money with which to

pay the bounty, and credit had already been so strained as not to have an effective weight.

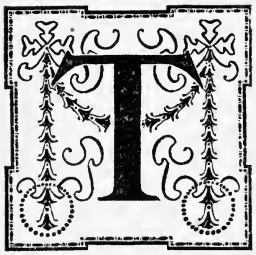
The British had gathered their forces at Princeton, hoping to cut off Washington, then at Trenton. A direct opposition could not be made by the Americans, yet a retreat would serve to undo all the good results of the dash on Trenton. A skirmish occurred on the 2d, and night closed in, leaving the two armies on opposite sides of the Assanpink Creek, resting on their arms. What followed is best told in Washington's own words: "Having by this time discovered, that the enemy were greatly superior in number, and that their design was to surround us, I ordered all our baggage to be removed silently to Burlington soon after dark; and at twelve o'clock, after renewing our fires, and leaving guards at the bridge in Trenton, and other passes on the same stream above, marched by a roundabout road to Princeton, where I knew they could not have much force left, and might have stores. One thing I was certain of, that it would avoid the appearance of a retreat (which was of consequence, or to run the hazard of the whole army being cut off), whilst we might by a fortunate stroke withdraw General Howe from Trenton, and give some reputation to our arms. Happily we succeeded." Nearly three hundred prisoners were taken, but the loss to the Americans was heavy. Again did Washington wish to pursue, and at least go as far as Brunswick, where stores and the military chest promised rich booty; but again did his officers oppose, and the harassed condition of his troops, many of whom had been without rest for two days, forbade the effort.

The English went back to Brunswick, and all

immediate danger to Philadelphia was averted. So panic-stricken did they appear that Washington conceived it possible to drive them out of the Jerseys. Heath was ordered to make a diversion against New York, to further this object, while the main army would rest at Morristown, to note the effect. "There now is the fairest opportunity of totally destroying the British army," he wrote on the 19th of January, "or at least of delaying their operations in the spring, till we may be prepared to oppose them by regular forces." From the most desired of visions he was rudely awakened by a combination of difficulties. Heath marched down to New York, made a pompous parade and theatrical demands, but accomplished nothing, retiring under rather ridiculous conditions. The militia under Washington once more proved his predictions, and threatened to leave him powerless at a time when every man would count. In place of being able to act offensively, Washington again recognized the impossibility of even facing the enemy.

CHAPTER XIV

IN WINTER QUARTERS



HEN at Morristown, a point that was not entirely to his liking, Washington settled his army for the winter. Very little of the force that had served during the year 1776 remained, and he was obliged to call in militia in sufficient numbers to maintain the appearance of an army and to gain the time needed to give the semblance of a disciplined array. He had given Howe such a rebuff that the liability to attack from that quarter was small, yet the mere possibility made it expedient to be watchful, and the certainty of an early and vigorous campaign in the spring made the task of preparing to meet it short and severe. The activity and excitement of movement concealed many of the great wants of the men, and now that they were again resting in camp, the old perplexities returned with fresh force and added complications.

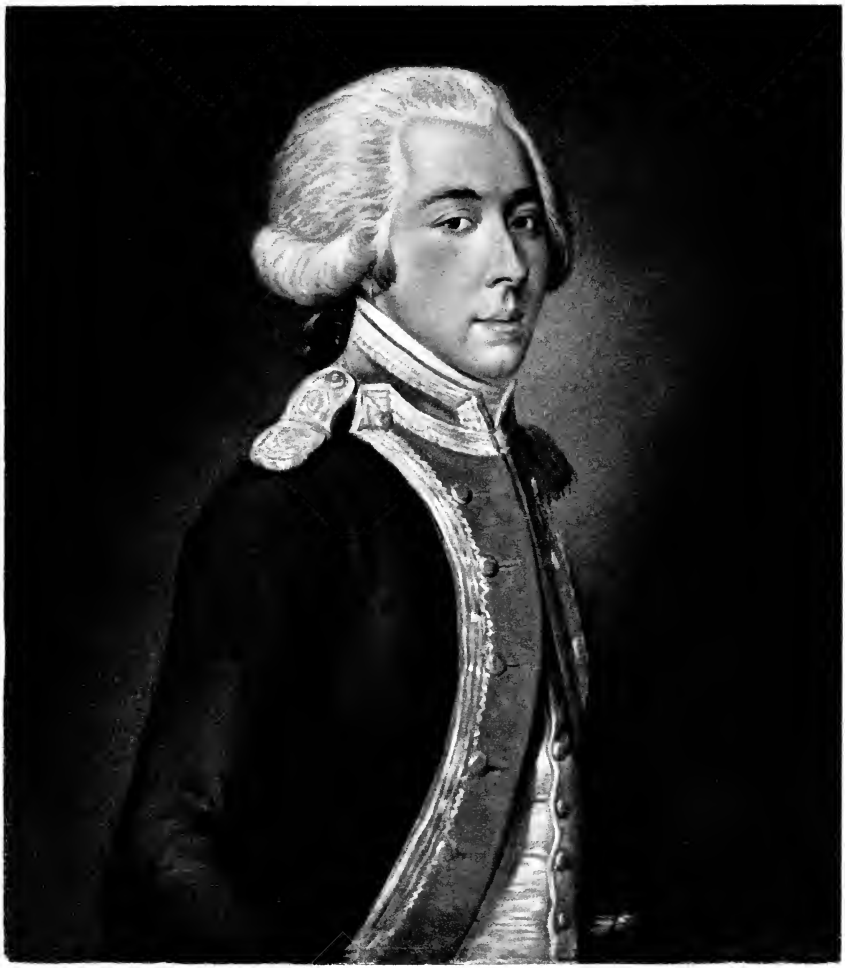
The new army, as finally provided for by Congress, called for more than one hundred battalions, and a corresponding appointment of officers. For the eighty-eight battalions apportioned among the States, the

naming of the officers rested with the State raising the regiments. For the sixteen additional battalions, the officers were to be named by the Commander-in-chief, and the regiments were to be composed of men enlisted wherever they could be obtained. The theory of giving the nomination of officers to the States proved difficult in practice, resulting in jealousies, favoritism, and a frequent resort to dishonest electioneering methods. In place of obtaining the best talent, it often resulted in giving the positions to men unfitted for the duties, and whose popularity alone commended them, against an actual test in service. Washington saw with dismay the confusion this system introduced into the existing army, from the desire to obtain appointments in the new, and the really low grade of officers coming forward for the first time. He had seen what the men could do, and what the officers had not done, and he did tardy justice to the New England part of the army. It was as a whole "wretchedly officered"; but wherever it was under good leaders, it had behaved well. "No people fly to arms readier than they do, or come better equipped, or with more regularity into the field than they." When the question of officers first came up, the General was indignant at the conduct of the States—"the different States, without regard to the qualifications of an officer, quarrelling about the appointments, and nominating such as are not fit to be shoeblacks, from the local attachments of this or that member of Assembly."

The characters of those who came forward in command of the regiments of militia were really worse, and called for some reform. These militia officers were

"generally of the lowest class of the people; and, instead of setting a good example to their men, are leading them into every kind of mischief, one species of which is plundering the inhabitants, under the pretence of their being Tories." Instead of protecting, they were distressing the people. Experience had brought home to the General the absolute necessity for insisting on good men, and he laid stress upon this point in issuing instructions for recruiting the additional battalions. "I earnestly recommend to you to be circumspect in your choice of officers. Take none but gentlemen; let no local attachments influence you; do not suffer your good nature, when an application is made, to say yes, when you ought to say no; remember, that it is a public, not a private cause, that is to be injured or benefited by your choice; recollect, also, that no instance has yet happened of good or bad behavior in a corps in our service, that has not originated with the officers. Do not take old men, nor yet fill your corps with boys, especially for captains."

During January the recruits came in very slowly, and officers engaged in obtaining them were backward in sending them to the army as rapidly as they were armed and clothed. "They are so extremely averse to turning out of comfortable quarters, that I cannot get a man to come near me, though I hear from all parts that the recruiting service goes on with great success." Money was needed in large sums, and, not being forthcoming, the energy of the officers was checked, and recruiting was almost at a stand. Some States undertook to raise regiments for their own defense, a service more tempting, at the same pay and bounty, than one at a



distance. This interfered with the obtaining of men for the Continental battalions, and called out a severe rebuke from Washington.

The condition of the hospital service had been little short of scandalous. The surgeons, both hospital and regimental, had done what was possible, but the quality of some of these officers made them a positive danger rather than an aid. The errors that were made, the inefficient distribution of medicines and hospital supplies, and the ignorance on the more subtle forms of camp diseases had played havoc among those who had the misfortune to go into the surgeons' care. Washington complained that his eyes and ears had been shocked by the sight and complaints of poor creatures perishing for want of proper or reasonable care. The sick, in leaving the army, carried into the country tales of their misery and long-suffering, and the proof of ruined health and undermined constitutions was too vividly presented to be gainsaid. It awakened a dread against running the risk of a repetition, and this interfered with the recruiting service, particularly to the southward. To have the poor wretches scattered along the road, and totally unfit for duty, was a sight that condemned the want of system that permitted it. Regiments had literally mouldered away, and to have this recur would close every possibility of again making enlistments in the States. No bounties, however large, could overcome this fatal objection to service; and even when men were obtained, to lose them by sickness was a waste of man as well as of bounty.

While attending to the military preparation he was not neglectful of the political features. The inducements

offered by the Howes had caused many to repair to the British, to make their peace and obtain a protection which did not in the end serve its purpose. They gave their allegiance, and, more often than not, a good share of their properties, as the English were not very scrupulous as to the source of their supplies. Now that the British army had drawn back, these inhabitants were in a questionable position. They could follow Howe to New York, but that involved very heavy sacrifices; they could seek to gain the confidence of the Continentals by pleading that they acted under threats, and were deluded by false promises into an engagement not to take up arms, or encourage others so to do, against the King of Great Britain. To relieve them from their danger, Washington issued a proclamation calling upon all those who had received letters of protection from the English to deliver them to him, and take an oath of allegiance to the United States of America, on pain of being considered enemies to these American States.

If Howe had exerted an undue influence on the people of New Jersey,—and it was admitted he had to such an extent as to prevent Washington from obtaining more than a regiment during his retreat,—it was entirely proper that Washington should counteract this influence by resorting to the same means. Yet the proclamation was severely criticised in and out of Congress, as involving a transgression of his power and a violation of civil rights. One member of Congress, Abraham Clark, a delegate from New Jersey, thought the paper was in many respects exceptionable and very improper; and he asked whether the oath was not an

absurd condition before any confederation had taken place. To Washington all circumstances pointed to the expediency of the oath, if only to cement the union of the States, and he wished one to become general. "From the first institution of civil government, it has been the national policy of every precedent State to endeavor to engage its members to the discharge of their duty by the obligation of some oath. Its force and happy influence have been felt in too many instances to need any arguments to support the policy or prove its utility. I have often thought the States have been too negligent in this particular, and am more fully convinced of it from the effect General Howe's excursion has produced in New Jersey. An oath is the only substitute that can be adopted to supply the defect of principle. By our inattention in this article, we lose a considerable cement to our own force, and give the enemy an opportunity to make the first tender of the oath of allegiance to the King. Its baneful influence is but too severely felt at this time. The people generally confess they were compelled to take protection, and subscribe the *Declaration*, yet it furnishes many with arguments to refuse taking any active part; and further they allege themselves bound to a neutrality at least. Many conscientious people, who were well-wishers to the cause, had they been bound to the States by an oath, would have suffered any punishment rather than have taken the oath of allegiance to the King; and are now lost to our interest for want of this necessary tie. Notwithstanding the obligations of the *Association*, they do not conceive it to have the same effect as an oath. The more united the inhabitants appear, the

greater difficulty General Howe will have in reconciling them to regal government, and consequently the less hope of conquering them. For these reasons, and many more that might be urged, I should strongly recommend to every State to fix upon some oath or affirmation of allegiance, to be tendered to all the inhabitants without exception, and to outlaw those that refuse it."

Even Washington recognized that this proceeding might be carried too far, and alienate in place of securing support. Many known enemies to the cause sought to delay their departure for thirty days, claiming that length of time to be granted by the proclamation. Washington ordered the immediate removal of such. Others were in doubt what course to take, and a reasonable time was allowed them to make a certainty of their doubt. Another class, who asserted that they could not consistently with their own principles take part against the Americans, yet were unwilling to come over to the cause, assumed the part of martyrs, and made it difficult to decide what treatment should be accorded to them. The General laid down the rule that lenity would operate with greater force in such instances than rigor. Those about him imbibed the same views. "He is blessed wherever he goes," wrote Tench Tilghman, a member of Washington's military family; "for the tory is protected in person and property equally with the whig; and indeed I often think more, for it is his maxim to convert by good usage, and not by severity."

A policy of mercy required singleness of purpose and a perfect understanding among the agents exercising it. In private letters Washington could speak of

"the set of parricides" who were seducing their countrymen to join the British general. He could give directions for removing them, driving them within the English lines with nothing but the absolute necessaries of life, and permitting nothing to be carried in that could be of service to the enemy. He did all this as a measure of defense, to prevent his camp being infested by spies, his plans betrayed, and his little force weakened by desertion. To those whom the fortune of war had thrown into his hands, prisoners of war, he was ever kind, and sought in every way to mitigate the cruel hardness of their position. The English, looking upon the Americans as rebels, and as worthy only of the punishment due to rebels, were not so considerate, and inflicted horrors upon the helpless that are remembered to this day. Protests from Washington accomplished something, a crude system of exchanges (as the King's officers could not recognize rebels so far as to enter into a formal cartel for exchanges) also accomplished something, but even with these mitigations the suffering of prisoners was unnecessarily great.

Towards the end of February the British gave some indications of moving, though it was doubtful whether they intended merely to beat up the American quarters or to undertake a serious campaign with Philadelphia for its object. The detachment coming from Rhode Island had arrived, and had been landed, with its artillery, in New Jersey, within easy reach of the divisions at Brunswick. Even before this reinforcement came, the English army in that State was estimated to number more than seven thousand, and all picked men. Against that number Washington had barely four

thousand, nearly all militia, as the regular force was passing through the smallpox, either by inoculation or by the natural way. A vague certainty of some attack prevailed at headquarters but not elsewhere. "I think we are now in one of the most critical periods which America ever saw, and because the enemy are not in actual motion (by the by I believe they are not far from it) every body seems to be lulled into ease and security." This was Washington's view, and he sought to inspire some life into the recruiting service by bringing on such men as had engaged, without waiting for the regiments to be complete. The problem of arming promised at one time to be insuperable, but the fortunate arrival of some supplies from France enabled this to be solved.

Under the weight of his difficulties the letters of Washington were full of forebodings and complaints of mismanagement. Congress, the representative body if any existed, and supposed to embody the wisdom of all the States, was restive under criticism. It had formed a foreign connection with France, although no one, not even Silas Deane himself, could have defined or explained the connection. Officers, many of them adventurers, were coming from France and the French islands; military supplies, direct from the King's armories, were reaching America; and the letters of the American commissioners were holding out hopes of greater things. At home, a new army had been provided for on paper, and the recruiting service was then in action, with some present results, and with better prospects for the future. While affairs were in so fair a train, and the enemy remained inactive, why should the General seek to prove

that everything was wrong? A change in the representation of many of the States had brought in a new set of men, who were not familiar with the experience of two years, and who had supplanted some of the wisest and coolest heads of the Continental Congress. The mere list showed what had been the loss, and the transfer of activity from that assembly to the legislatures or executives of the States could only be a partial compensation. Franklin, Duane, Deane, Harrison, Dickinson, William Livingston, Nelson, and Rutledge had no successors.

From Robert Morris came a note of warning. All leaders, he held, should feel and think boldly in order to inspirit others. "Heaven, no doubt for the noblest purposes, has blessed you with a firmness of mind, steadiness of countenance, and patience in sufferings, that give you infinite advantages over other men. This being the case, you are not to depend on other people's exertions being equal to your own. One mind feeds and thrives on misfortunes by finding resources to get the better of them; another sinks under their weight, thinking it impossible to resist; and, as the latter description probably includes the majority of mankind, we must be cautious of alarming them." The conclusion was that Washington, without stooping to deception, should draw brighter pictures, and lend the weight of his name to favorable accounts that might "draw forth the exertions of some good men sooner than distress does from others." To preach optimism, when there was no good ground for so doing, did not accord with Washington's ideas of his duties. "Common prudence dictates the necessity of duly attending to the circumstances of both armies, before the style of conquerors

is assumed by either; and sorry I am to add, that this does not appear to be the case with us; nor is it in my power to make Congress fully sensible of the real situation of our affairs, and that it is with difficulty, (if I may use the expression,) that I can, by every means in my power, keep the life and soul of this army together. In a word, when they are at a distance, they think it is but to say, *Presto begone*, and everything is done. They seem not to have any conception of the difficulty and perplexity attending those who are to execute."

In taking this stand Washington proved his wisdom as well as his strength, and had indicated the weak point of congressional action. By constantly and not very intelligently interfering with matters properly belonging to the General to decide, it had produced confusion as unnecessary as it was difficult to allay. The sending of French officers, who could not be of service, was in itself a threat against the whole constitution of the army. Places could not be found for them without displacing American officers of far higher utility. After many and increasingly urgent requests from Washington for general officers, Congress elected five major-generals—Stirling, Mifflin, St. Clair, Stephen, and Lincoln; and ten brigadier-generals—Poor, Glover, Paterson, Wayne, Varnum, De Haas, Weedon, Muhlenberg, John Cadwalader, and Woodford. The lists were unexceptionable so far as each name was concerned, but why had Benedict Arnold been passed over among the major-generals? Five of his junior officers were placed over him, and his known sensitiveness to slight, real or fancied, made it certain that he would at once hand in his resignation.

Washington believed some error had been made by Congress, and begged him not to take any hasty step. Such incidents made Washington's task of forming a good body of officers one of great complication. "Trifling punctilios should have no influence upon a man's conduct in such a cause, and at such a time as this. If smaller matters do not yield to greater, if trifles, light as air in comparison with what we are contending for, can withdraw or withhold gentlemen from service, when our all is at stake and a single cast of the die may turn the tables, what are we to expect?"

A plan of campaign must be prepared, one that would be feasible under the circumstances of the Continental army and the uncertainties of the English movements. Not only was Howe's army to be accounted for, but the probable incursion from Canada must be met and, if possible, checked. Philadelphia was still believed to be the principal object of Howe, but his vessels could render a stroke in the eastern States, or even in those of the south, certain and so swift as to make it improbable that any assistance to the country could be given by Washington. With more than one exposed region to defend, the problem was reduced to a proper distribution of the available force so as to be readily concentrated where the need was greatest. To Schuyler, whose position in the northern army made his aid of the highest service, he explained his views.

"It is of the greatest importance to the safety of a country involved in a defensive war, to endeavor to draw their troops together at some post at the opening of a campaign, so central to the theatre of war, that they may

be sent to the support of any part of the country, which the enemy may direct their motions against. It is a military observation, strongly supported by experience, 'that a superior army may fall a sacrifice to an inferior, by an injudicious division.' It is impossible without knowing the enemy's intentions, to guard against every sudden incursion, or give protection to all the inhabitants. Some principal object should be had in view, in taking post, to cover the most important part of the country, instead of dividing our force to give shelter to the whole, to attempt which cannot fail to give the enemy an opportunity of beating us in detachments. As we are under the necessity of guessing at the enemy's intentions and further operations, the great object of attention ought to be, where the most proper place is, to draw our force together from the eastward and westward, to cover the country, prevent the enemy's penetration, and annoy them in turn, should our strength be equal to the attempt. There is not a State upon the continent, but thinks itself in danger, and scarcely an officer at any one post, but conceives a reinforcement necessary. To comply with the demands of the whole is utterly impossible, and, if attempted would prove our inevitable ruin."

The early plan provided for collecting a large force at Ticonderoga; but Washington believed Peekskill to possess greater advantages. It was more central, and whether the attack came from Canada or New York the men would be more available, and would serve to hold in check a large army of the enemy at New York. With this end attained, a capital stroke at the British in New Jersey would have immense advantages. It would

free the country from the ravages of the enemy; it would make less probable, if not impossible, a descent from Canada, and would prevent any gain from reinforcements coming from England. A defeat would totally ruin their plan of operations for the next campaign, and perhaps discourage them from making any attempts. Congress had given its own views of what should be done, "confining the enemy within their present quarters, preventing their getting supplies from the country, and totally subduing them before they are reinforced," but these instructions were based on a splendid disregard of the instruments available. It was thought Washington had a large army behind him, for he purposely exaggerated its numbers to produce a proper respect in the enemy. Reinforcements were believed to be on their way to join him; but these reinforcements were "ideal," existing only on paper. On March 15th his whole force, fit for duty, was under three thousand, and there was no prospect of an increase.

By the middle of April the hope of an adequate force was still dim. "There is such a total depression of that military ardor, which I hoped would have inspired every officer when he found his pay genteelly augmented, and the army put upon a respectable footing, that it seems to me as if all public spirit was sunk into the means of making money by the service or quarrelling upon the most trivial points of rank." Had the last army been enlisted for three years he felt he could drive the British from New Jersey; in place of which he was seeking to obtain enough men to act on the defensive. The contradictory orders of the executives of some States, and even of some officers, as to the rendezvous

for recruits, seemed to have a design to harass the troops and delay a junction. A strange, unaccountable languor appeared to prevail at a time when the cause called loudly for the most vigorous and active exertions. Virginia, his own State, offered volunteer corps, which were even more destructive of an army than militia on short enlistments, claiming to themselves a sort of superior merit, and proving uneasy and impatient of command. Such a proposition was strongly condemned by Washington, who took the opportunity to call attention to the regulation preventing inoculation for the smallpox. He knew that the disease in the natural way was more deadly to the army than the enemy's sword, and had come to appreciate the utility of making provision against the scourge.

Early in April Howe knew that he could look for little reinforcements from England, and prepared his plan of operations accordingly. He abandoned the expedition against New England, for which he had made some preparations, and did not intend to make any important movement up the North River — a fatal error, considering that Burgoyne was to march down from Canada to that river to make a junction with Howe's force that would prove irresistible. To make the union possible, it was essential that Howe should come part of the way to remove certain troublesome obstructions and overawe the State of New York. The capture of Philadelphia was the keystone of his plan, and he thus hoped to amuse Washington, and so keep him from moving against Burgoyne. Intent upon obtaining all the assistance that could be purchased, he issued a proclamation offering a bounty to those who should bring in

arms, and to such as should take up arms and join him he promised land. With dismay Washington saw the desertions from his force increase considerably, and felt powerless to counteract the means used by Howe, for he knew the bounties to recruits had not been regularly paid, and the complaints were general that even pay had not been received. Some officers set a bad example, and not a few of the foreigners who had enlisted deserted to the enemy with their arms.

In one particular Congress was all too active — in conferring appointments on foreigners for political and honorary motives. Deane did not hesitate to promise rank to those who flocked to him, even as high as that of adjutant-general or brigadier-general. Congress, having only the letter of recommendation before it, would grant commissions and send the newly created officers to Washington to be provided with commands or duties. There were no vacancies, and there was a certainty of discontent among the Americans, who had served from the beginning of the war, but had received no such honorable marks of favor or distinction. "Good policy, in my opinion, forbids the disgusting of a whole corps to gratify the pride of an individual ; for it is by the zeal and activity of our own people, that the cause must be supported, and not by a few hungry adventurers. Besides, the error of these appointments is now clear and manifest, and the views of Congress evidently defeated ; for by giving high rank to people of no reputation or service, you have disgusted their own countrymen ; or, in other words, raised their expectations to an insatiable pitch. For the man, who was a captain in France, finding another who was only a subaltern there,

or perhaps nothing, appointed to a majority with us, extends his views instantly to a regiment; in like manner the field officer can accept of nothing less than a brigade, and so on, by which means the man of real rank and merit must be excluded, or perhaps your whole military system disordered. In the meanwhile I am haunted and teased to death by the importunity of some, and dissatisfaction of others."

The climax was reached when a French officer presented himself to Washington, bringing an agreement with Deane that he should command the artillery of the Continental army, with the rank and pay of a major-general. He had, to be sure, the endorsement of the French military authorities, and had come on the same vessel with some much-needed supplies; but neither he nor his rank could justify the pretensions he set forth, and Washington recognized at once how impossible it would be to keep Knox in the service should Ducoudray be accepted at his own estimation. The merits of the latter might be great, but was it expedient to place the command of so important an arm of the service in a foreigner, who had no ties of interest in the States, and whose abilities had not been tested? The only thing to be done was to send Ducoudray on to Congress, but with a note of warning as to the effects of admitting his claims.

The error was committed in the beginning, when the rank of field officer was given to any Frenchman who came with a recommendation. The expectations of the late comers, some of them without credentials, were as a consequence pitched too high, and yet even an inclination to disregard their claims produced disgust

and discontent. To discriminate among the applicants was a delicate matter, and one for which Congress was not well adapted. Experience in camp and field could develop the genius, or want of it, in these foreigners, but that could not be had without giving them commands, at this time, out of the range of possibility. Hamilton, wise beyond his years, wished to discriminate for public reasons. "This will enable us to shake off the despicable part with safety, and to turn a deaf ear to the exorbitant demands of the many. It will easily be believed in France that their want of merit occasioned their want of success, from the extraordinary marks of favor that have been conferred on others: whereas, the united voice of complaint from the whole might make ill impressions in their own country, which it is not our interest should exist."

A few weeks later a rumor came that Congress had given Ducoudray all that he had asked. At once Generals Greene, Sullivan, and Knox wrote to the President of Congress begging him to confirm the rumor, and, if confirmed, to permit them to retire. The tone of the letters was too curt to please Congress, who regarded the action of the generals as "an attempt to influence their decisions, an invasion of the liberties of the people, and as indicating a want of confidence in the justice of Congress." Unless the officers were willing to make proper acknowledgments for an interference of so dangerous a tendency, they were at liberty to retire from the service. The truth was that Congress had, as yet, not even considered the Ducoudray matter, and a few days later, when it came before them, his demands were disallowed. It was Washington who conveyed to

the striking generals the rebuff of Congress, and it was full proof of his delicacy and power of reasoning that he could persuade the three to remain in the service, bound to it and to him more strongly than ever.

Rumors of criticism had reached him. "We have some amongst us," he confided to Reed, "and I dare say generals, who wish to make themselves popular at the expense of others, or who think the cause is not to be advanced otherwise than by fighting,—the peculiar circumstances under which it is to be done, and the consequences which may follow, are objects too trivial for their attention,—but as I have one great end in view, I shall, maugre all the [*illegible*] of this kind, steadily pursue the means which in my judgment leads to the accomplishment of it, not doubting but that the candid part of mankind, if they are convinced of my integrity, will make proper allowance for my inexperience and frailties."

CHAPTER XV

SARATOGA AND PHILADELPHIA

ON July 1st, it was full time for a campaign. When Washington saw Howe retiring to Staten Island he learned of the first movement of Burgoyne from Canada. He could not believe that Howe had any other motive in his retreat than to prepare for a push up the Hudson, to take the passes and so prepare for a junction with Burgoyne. As plainly seen were his own operations: he should keep Howe below the Highlands, and prevent a union of the two armies. Success would depend upon Schuyler's being able to hold in check the Canada expedition, and only a few days passed before it was learned that Ticonderoga had been evacuated. The American force under St. Clair had gone to Mount Independence, and feeling insecure in that place had retreated towards Albany. The first confused accounts pointed to an even greater disaster,— the capture of St. Clair's army. Days passed without any news, and only shrouded in deeper mystery a step that Washington had not believed to be within the compass of his reasoning. That

a strong force should so lightly abandon a strong position, without striking a blow, was an event of chagrin and surprise.

He had sent one brigade to reinforce the northern army, and now held another in readiness to march on short notice. The main body was in the meanwhile moved towards the North River, to a position easy to be used in a northern or southern manœuvre. Knowing his bravery, activity, and influence with the eastern militia, Washington wished to send Arnold to the northward, and Congress directed him to proceed to headquarters for orders. Putnam, in the Highlands, was strongly urged to omit no precautions against attack, even to blocking all roads not absolutely necessary to keep open communications for supplies. St. Clair was not a prisoner, but the prospect was not promising. Drawing encouragement from the reverse, Washington thought Burgoyne, flushed with apparent success, might hurry into measures which would in their consequences be favorable to the continent. "We should never despair. Our situation before has been unpromising and has changed for the better — so, I trust, it will again. If new difficulties arise, we must only put forth new exertions and proportion our efforts to the exigency of the times." No more men could be sent from the main army, and the militia of New England and New York was alone available. Orders were given for them to meet at Saratoga, and the plea for aid was made all the stronger by the known presence of Indians in Burgoyne's army. The main object was to check and, if possible, repel an enemy who, "not content with hiring mercenaries to lay waste your country, have now brought Savages,

with the avowed and express intent of adding murder to desolation."

Washington believed that Burgoyne would act with energy, as he enjoyed a reputation for brilliant valor. Before the first skirmish, however, he recognized an almost fatal weakness in the English general's operations. The army comprised about five thousand men, but was unprovided with the wagons necessary to transport the baggage, supplies, and apparatus. To penetrate a country where no supplies could be had, and through which numerous garrisons must be left to maintain communication with Canada, was a rash venture, and every mile advanced would reduce the fighting force by a constant drain for detachments and safeguards to protect their rear or awe the country. The course to be pursued was clear to Washington, who gave his views to Schuyler. "As they have to cut out their road, and remove the impediments you have put in their way, this circumstance, with the incumbrance they must feel in their baggage, stores, etc., will inevitably retard their march a considerable time, and give you leisure and opportunity to prepare a good reception for them. If they continue to act in detachments, you will have it in your power to improve it to very great advantage, by falling vigorously upon some one of them with your whole force, which, if you are fortunate enough to succeed in, will be fatal to them." This made it important to gather a respectable force of militia, but the recruiting service had so completely broken down that a new system was suggested by Washington and adopted by Congress. The recruiting agent was no longer to be an officer of the army, but a person appointed by the

State, and under its direction, to obtain men from a particular district.

Although Howe had embarked his troops on July 12th, it was not until the 24th that he solved in part the doubts of Washington by sailing from the Hook. He had sought to keep alive a hesitation by sending vessels now up the North River, and again into the Sound; but to take the ocean pointed to a southern expedition, and, in all probability, one against Philadelphia. Even an intercepted letter from Howe, carefully prepared to deceive, could not blind Washington to his real intention. When the vessels were sighted off the coasts, he was confirmed in his conjecture; yet he could not understand Howe's in a manner abandoning Burgoyne, and, after his dispositions for marching to the southward were made, could not help casting his eyes continually behind him. On the last day of July, an express from Congress brought news of the British fleet being off the capes of Delaware. On the same evening, Washington, leaving the army, reached Philadelphia, only to return at once, as the British fleet again stood out to sea. It is known that Washington brought his army thus far against his own judgment, and on the advice of a majority of his officers. He now retraced his steps and was again under great doubt where the enemy intended to strike. Charleston was the only place of importance south of the Chesapeake, and its stores might attract the enemy. Against that the lateness of the season must be placed. Even had that city been the object of the British, the American army could not have rendered any assistance.

On August 1st Congress adopted a resolution

authorizing Washington to send an officer to command the northern army. This marked the culmination of a long struggle that was based upon little but sectional jealousy. For two years there had been a feeling of distrust of Schuyler among the New England States, for which no good reason could be given. Of its presence and daily force there were many proofs, and there was little doubt that it hampered the operations of the General and introduced a spirit of discord among those acting under him. The northern army had always been somewhat independent of Washington, and more immediately under Congress, who named its officers and controlled its operations. It had been made thus independent to offer a foil against an overweening authority in Washington, for the jealousy of a military commander was strong among the colonists and in Congress. Advice, Washington could offer; but beyond that he had not interfered with its operations save to give it reinforcements to the extent of his abilities, and sometimes beyond his safety. He now declined to make an appointment, though urged by almost the entire New England delegation to name Gates for the place. This showed the animus of the movement; for Gates, always more of a political than a military agent, had been near Congress, where he could favor his own ambitions. Washington knew the merits of Schuyler, but he also saw that with Gates in command the excuse of a want of confidence in the general officers, so often urged by the eastern States to withhold reinforcements, would be wanting. Gates received a commission from Congress.

President Hancock learned of the presence of the English fleet in Chesapeake Bay on August 22d, and

at once sent an express to Washington. This intelligence, unwelcome as it was, solved all doubt as to the operations at hand. New England, no longer expecting an incursion by sea, could devote all its energies to checking Burgoyne, already known to be in want of many things, and still smarting from the defeat inflicted on a detachment at Bennington by General Stark. The Highlands were in a good attitude of defense, and almost strong enough to resist any attempt of the garrison at New York, now under the command of Sir Henry Clinton. Washington moved his own forces to Philadelphia, marching through the city by day, to produce an effect upon the disaffected, and making a fine appearance. On the following afternoon the army reached Wilmington, at which place all the militia within call was summoned to assemble. The enemy had debarked at the Head of Elk, and Washington, with all his horse, save one regiment, rode over to reconnoitre. He made his dispositions upon a plan that experience had shown to be a good one. In place of combining the regulars and militia in one force, offering a fair mark for a combined attack from the enemy and putting all at risk on the issue of a single battle, he had bodies of militia hanging on the flanks of the enemy, so as to give the greatest possible annoyance during the march. Such a plan was forced upon him by the smallness of his army; but it was a wise plan, as it prevented the British from gaining so decided an advantage as their superiority in service and discipline would seem to command.

The efficacy of the arrangement was not tested before the English, advancing along Brandywine Creek, met the main force of the Americans and drove it from

the field. Washington claimed that the intelligence received was uncertain and contradictory, and no proper disposition of his troops could be made. Fighting under disadvantages, the Americans held their ground for a time, but, being beaten back on both wings, were obliged to retreat. Demoralizing as the setback was, it might have been disastrous; but the American force held together, a point gained in discipline, if no more.

Washington entertained a hope of being able to meet the enemy before they could reach Philadelphia, but the condition of his army was such as to forbid. Marching and countermarching as well as he was able, through night and rain that damped the spirits of his soldiers and ruined their ammunition; unable to learn where the enemy was, and finally unable to make a forced march because of a want of shoes, at least one thousand men being barefooted, he had the mortification of knowing that his efforts had been fruitless, and nothing remained but to strengthen the river posts to annoy and delay the English fleet and army, and in all probability prevent their supplies from reaching them.

Howe had plainly outgeneralled the Americans, and was within reach of his object almost without meeting se rious opposition. The British army in Philadelphia was estimated to number eight thousand, while Washington commanded, according to the returns, the same number of regulars and about three thousand militia. By awaiting an opportunity a fair blow could be struck, as the enemy were distracted by the forts on the river. On October 4th, learning that a detachment of English had been sent to reduce Billingsport, Washington attacked Germantown and but for the confusion produced by a

heavy fog, and the undue attention given to a small party in the Chew house, would have accomplished all that could be desired. He was obliged to retreat in the midst of the most promising appearances, and described the day as "rather unfortunate than injurious." Such were the surprise, tumult, and despair of the English that they had appointed a retreat to Chester; but it was not for some days that the Americans learned how near they had been to gaining a complete victory.

The old difficulty again came forward, and with aggravated weight. The militia, having served their term, threatened to go. In making an estimate of his strength Washington found much food for reflection. While New York and New Jersey were defending themselves by their own militia, and supplied men for the main and northern armies, Pennsylvania gave only twelve hundred militia, and to all appearances found it impossible to maintain that number. The most opulent and populous of the States, with its capital in the hands of the enemy, could only supply a force that was of little service and promised nothing better. Without the free navigation of the Delaware it would be too dangerous for Howe to remain in Philadelphia, and he could not obtain a mastery of the river without taking the forts that a garrison of militia could defend. In an indignant tone Washington advised the executive of the State to call out one half of the men capable of bearing arms, and rouse the people of the province to a manly and effectual opposition. Even its battalions in the Continental army were not maintained at their full force. As it was, a draft could raise men in time only for the next campaign, to be begun in the spring.

In the matter of officers Congress again placed stumbling-blocks in the organization of the army. The General had more than once complained of a want of general officers, and the recognition or appointment of foreigners was of no assistance. The Ducoudray incident carried no lesson to Congress, and Washington wrote to Franklin, now in Paris, stating his embarrassments, and asking him to discourage their coming. So sensitive was he that the romantic mission of Lafayette made little impression, and he saw in him the greedy adventurer, eager to secure all that could further his reputation and advancement in France. Count Pulaski had proved his ability in Europe and received an attention not accorded to others with higher recommendations but of very limited service. Arendt and Armand received commissions and proved their worthiness; but Deborre resigned under a cloud. Some of the Americans were placed by Congress in positions where they could be of no service. Schuyler was practically retired, St. Clair was on trial for evacuating the northern posts, and Sullivan was wrongly suspected of cowardice and would have been under suspension had not Washington interfered. As the army then stood, two major-generals and four brigadiers in addition were needed, so Lafayette and DeKalb were given commissions as major-generals, and it was rumored Conway, an Irishman of the French army, was to be made a major-general.

Good reasons existed why Conway should not receive the appointment. Upon his arrival, he made a fair impression upon Washington as "a man of candor," but more because he could speak English than for any demonstrated ability. Service tested his quality and he

rang false. His merit existed more in his imagination than in reality. "It is a maxim with him," wrote Washington, "to leave no service of his own untold, nor to want any thing which is to be obtained by importunity." He was the youngest brigadier in the service, and he would be promoted over the heads of his seniors. No action of his had been of such conspicuous worth as to merit such reward, and those who would be passed over had as good, if not better, claims to promotion. It was certain that they would judge of the propriety of serving under Conway, while recognizing the authority of Congress to make the appointment. The spirit of resignation was prevalent among the officers. "No day passes over my head without application for leave to resign. Within the last six days, I am certain, twenty commissions at least have been tendered to me." To advance Conway would involve the army in confusion, for every senior brigadier would resign. "I must conjure you to conjure Congress to consider this matter well, and not, by a real act of injustice, compel some good officers to leave the service, and thereby incur a train of evils unforeseen and irremediable. To sum up the whole, I have been a slave to the service; I have undergone more than most men are aware of, to harmonize so many discordant parts; but it will be impossible for me to be of any service, if such insuperable difficulties are thrown in my way."

A note from Governor Clinton, dated October 15th, reached Washington three days later, and told of the capitulation of Burgoyne and his entire army. With sincere feeling Washington saw in it a signal stroke of Providence, and without a trace of envy turned to the

perplexities of his own field. "Should Providence be pleased to crown our arms in the course of the campaign with one more fortunate stroke, I think we shall have no cause for anxiety respecting the future designs of Britain. I trust all will be well in His good time." Sir Henry Clinton had gone up the river with an evident intention of joining Burgoyne, but was met by a messenger of defeat, and, after plundering a little, turned back to New York.

For ten days Washington awaited some official notice of Burgoyne's capitulation, and before the end of that time began to be uneasy lest the first reports were premature, and no great victory had been gained. Even then it was from Putnam that he learned the terms of the convention of surrender. Not a line from Gates had come, and no intimation of what was to be done with his army, of a part of which Washington stood in such sore need. By a well considered attack, the British might be driven from Philadelphia; but his officers in council decided that in the present condition of the army an attack was inadvisable. The forts should be reinforced, and twenty regiments drawn from the northern army. To obviate delay, Alexander Hamilton was sent to Gates to point out to him the absolute necessity of sending down these reinforcements, if Howe was to be placed in the position Burgoyne then held. Yet with such positive views, Washington showed his consideration for Gates. "If, upon your meeting with General Gates, you should find that he intends, in consequence of his success, to employ the troops under his command upon some expedition, by the prosecution of which the common cause will be more benefited than

by their being sent down to reinforce this army, it is not my wish to give any interruption to the plan."

Although Washington was not responsible for the convention of Saratoga, the arrangement of details and the many inconveniences fell upon him. Howe's object was to get the soldiers to England, where they could be used for garrison purposes, setting free the same number of men for service in America. The maintenance of these prisoners imposed a heavy tax upon New England, which earnestly desired to throw it off, and to this extent supported Howe's wishes. Washington did not wish to expedite the passage to England, clearly seeing that it would mean a heavy reinforcement to Howe's army. He would suggest causes for delay, refusing, for example, to permit a change of the place of embarking, from Boston, which was named in the convention, to Rhode Island, a safer and more convenient place for the British transports. He would support the prisoners while on shore, but not an ounce of sea supplies would he furnish or even sell to them or the vessels. At a later period he wished all supplies for these convention prisoners to be paid for in coin, and Congress adopted the suggestion, much to the surprise of Burgoyne, who thought it strange that Congress would not accept its own currency.

On November 16th Fort Mifflin, after a gallant defense, was evacuated by the Americans, and this practically gave the British full possession of Philadelphia. It was on this fort that the attention and consideration of Washington had been fixed for weeks, and on its maintenance depended the ability to annoy the enemy in the city. Too heavy sacrifices were not demanded, as

the importance of Philadelphia to the English had been greatly exaggerated.

After a week of anxiety, during which the last of the river defenses were captured by the British, Washington received the brigades from the north and once more determined to make an assault. Cornwallis, with a part of the army, was in New Jersey, and in his absence the force in Philadelphia was about equal to that under Washington. In council, eleven of the officers were opposed to the plan, and only four favored it. In the face of such a decision it would be unwise to make an attack, however strongly the pressure from the outside urged it. Upon reconnoitring the works around Philadelphia, they were found to be so strong that the engineer, Du Portail, declared they could not be taken by assault. Disappointed, the General turned to Greene, now taking high rank among the trusted. "Our situation, as you justly observe, is distressing from a variety of irremediable causes, but more especially from the impracticability of answering the expectations of the world without running hazards which no military principles can justify, and which, in case of failure, might prove the ruin of our cause; patience, and a steady perseverance in such measures as appear warranted by sound reason and policy, must support us under the censure of the one, and dictate a proper line of conduct for the attainment of the other; that is the great object in view. This, as it ever has, will, I think, ever remain the first wish of my heart, however I may mistake the means of accomplishment."

Public opinion must be outraged by withdrawing the Continental troops from New Jersey. Knowing his

want of strength, Washington had spread reports of a larger force than he ever possessed, desiring to deceive the enemy and hold them in check. These reports also deceived his friends, and both in and out of Congress dissatisfaction was freely expressed over his inactivity. Congress had turned to Gates, and directed him to undertake the capture of the forts held by the British on the North River, and put them in the best posture of defense. As the forts had been evacuated voluntarily, and even Ticonderoga was no longer an enemy's post, but little remained for Gates to accomplish save to fortify and plan for the campaign of the next spring. A more important step was taken by calling Gates to the new Board of War.

The many details coming before Congress had caused a weakness in executive capacity. To secure more prompt attention to military matters, it was determined to create a Board of War, to be composed of persons not in Congress. The original intention was to make a board of three members. Mifflin, who had just resigned his commissions as major-general and quartermaster-general, was the first member selected, and offers were made to Timothy Pickering, lately acting as adjutant-general of the army, and Robert Hanson Harrison, the secretary of Washington. Such a membership was justifiable if Congress wished to secure advisers of the highest experience and best information. The positions held by these men were a guarantee of their ability. The service under Mifflin was open to criticism, but the difficulties were great. Pickering had not yet developed a political ambition, and was an industrious worker. Harrison had proved a safe and wise adviser and trusted

confidant. Before the board was complete, Congress raised the membership to five, and introduced a character that stamped its functions with an objectionable bias. Harrison declined the appointment, and Gates, Joseph Trumbull, and Richard Peters were named. Trumbull could bring his experiences in the field, and Peters made a conscientious committeeman. Gates was chosen president of the board, and attended its sessions even before he had qualified as member.

So intent was Congress upon a winter's campaign that a committee was sent to camp to press it upon Washington. Once with the General, a freer interchange of opinion could be given, and conditions could be seen better than they could be described in any despatch. It was admitted at once that the army must be completed before any movement could be made; and to complete the army the establishment must be placed upon a better footing. There was great discontent among the officers, whose pay was still so insufficient as to afford them no comfort. It was necessary to make a commission a desirable object, and to preserve the rank from contempt and degradation. The committee proposed to form a half-pay establishment; to offer pensions to the widows of officers; and to make a new regulation of rank, confining it as far as was possible to the line of the army.

This reform could only affect the army in the next campaign, and could not relieve present distresses. No movement could be made because of the defects in the commissary department. Remonstrance had failed to produce any reform, and pleading was as inefficacious. Fighting was preferable to starving, but without food

there could be no fighting. "Three days successively," wrote Varnum, "we have been destitute of bread. Two days we have been entirely without meat. The men must be supplied, or they cannot be commanded." On December 23d, oppressed by what he saw and heard, Washington wrote to Congress: "Unless some great and capital change suddenly takes in that line [commissary's department], this army must inevitably be reduced to one or other of these three things; starve, dissolve, or disperse in order to obtain subsistence in the best manner they can. Rest assured this is not an exaggerated picture." Mutiny among the troops was an ever-present contingency, and the future promised little improvement. Worn out by his anxieties, the General protested his helplessness, and turned upon his critics. The change in the head of the commissary department was made contrary to his judgment. "Yet, finding that the inactivity of the army, whether for want of provisions, clothes, or other essentials, is charged to my account, not only by the common vulgar but by those in power, it is time to speak plain in exculpation of myself. With truth, then, I can declare, that no man in my opinion ever had his measures more impeded than I have, by every department of the army.

"We find gentlemen, without knowing whether the army was really going into winter quarters or not (for I am sure no resolution of mine would warrant the remonstrance), reprobating the measure as much as if they thought the soldiers were made of stocks or stones, and equally insensible of frost and snow; and moreover, as if they conceived it easily practicable for an inferior army, under the disadvantages I have described ours to

be, which are by no means exaggerated, to confine a superior one, in all respects well-appointed and provided for a winter's campaign, within the city of Philadelphia, and to cover from depredation and waste the States of Pennsylvania and Jersey. But what makes this matter still more extraordinary in my eye is, that those very gentlemen,—who were well apprized of the nakedness of the troops from ocular demonstration, who thought their own soldiers worse clad than others, and who advised me near a month ago to postpone the execution of a plan I was about to adopt, in consequence of a resolve of Congress for seizing clothes, under strong assurances that an ample supply would be collected in ten days agreeably to a decree of the State (not one article of which, by the by, is yet come to hand),—should think a winter's campaign, and the covering of these States from the invasion of an enemy, so easy and practicable a business. I can assure those gentlemen, that it is a much easier and less distressing thing to draw remonstrances in a comfortable room by a good fireside, than to occupy a cold, bleak hill, and sleep under frost and snow, without clothes or blankets. However, although they seem to have little feeling for the naked and distressed soldiers, I feel abundantly for them, and, from my soul, I pity those miseries, which it is neither in my power to relieve or prevent."

Nothing remained but to put the troops in winter quarters. There was much difference of opinion on the proper place to be taken, for it should be a position which would best cover the troops, and at the same time protect the country and prevent the enemy from obtaining supplies when the Delaware was closed or

obstructed by ice. To all suggestions for protecting particular places Washington turned a deaf ear. "It would give me infinite pleasure to afford protection to every individual, and to every spot of ground, in the whole of the United States. Nothing is more my wish; but this is not possible with our present force. In all wars, from the nature of things, individuals and particular places must be exposed. It has ever been and ever will be the case, and we have only to pity and to regret the misfortune of those, who from their situation are subject to ravage and depredation. These facts are obvious to all; and if that system of conduct is pursued by an army, which is most likely to give the most extensive security, it is all that can be done or expected from it." By keeping the army together the best prospects of checking the excursions of the enemy were attained, and by settling at Valley Forge the widest extent of territory could be protected. One division was placed at Wilmington to shield Delaware; New Jersey was left to its fate.

Government by requisition had been tested to the full and was failing in every direction. The rise of State governments, clothed with greater powers than Congress could ever hope to enjoy, drew off the strongest men and made them State rather than Continental representatives. They began to show jealousy of the military power, and resented such exercise of it as was involved in imposing oaths of allegiance, military requisitions, and regulations of commerce on the citizens. Without money, Congress looked to the States for the means; and without provisions, Washington turned to the executives of the States to supply them. A reason

for this existed. "The people at large are governed much by custom. To acts of legislation or civil authority they have ever been taught to yield a willing obedience, without reasoning about their propriety; on those of military power, whether immediate or derived originally from another source, they have ever looked with a jealous and suspicious eye."

One by one the duties of providing for the army were thrown upon the States. The recruiting was taken from army officers and given to State agents. The clothing needed by the men was in part imported from abroad, but it was from the States the larger part was expected.

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CHAPTER XVI

FACTION

NO reliance upon a French war had ever been entertained by Washington. An underhand assistance in arms and ammunition was as far as he thought France would go, and a declaration of war must come from Great Britain, if at all. Towards the end of November, 1777, his opinion changed, and he expressed surprise at the delay of the French, attributing it to political reasons. Yet he never exaggerated the benefit to be derived from a contest between France and England, preaching self-help on every occasion. "Nor should we, in my opinion, turn our expectations to, or have the least dependence on, the intervention of a foreign war. Our wishes on this have been disappointed hitherto, and perhaps it may long be the case. However, be this as it may, our reliance should be wholly on our own strength and exertions. . . . For my own part, I should be happy if the idea of a foreign rupture should be thrown entirely out of the scale of politics, and that it may have not the least weight in our public measures."

Chance opened to Washington a design of certain officers in the army to displace him. Gates had sent his aid, James Wilkinson, to announce to Congress the surrender of Burgoyne. Proceeding leisurely on his way, and overweighted by the communication he was charged to make, Wilkinson stopped at Reading, and in a burst of confidence told an aid of Lord Stirling that Brigadier-General Conway had written to Gates, severely reflecting upon the Commander-in-chief. The exact phrase even was communicated: "Heaven has been determined to save your country; or a weak General and bad counsellors would have ruined it." As no intimation was given by Wilkinson of secrecy, the aid, one Major McWilliams, told it to Stirling, who at once sent a copy of the sentence to Washington.

Washington wrote a curt note to Conway, stating that in a letter received the paragraph just given was contained. Not a word of comment or of criticism was added. To the members of his family he showed the letter, but neither directly nor indirectly did he communicate it, or the information given by Stirling, to any officer of the army, except Lafayette. He feared some interruption to the peace of the army, and some dissension that might afford a gleam of hope to the enemy. There was but one course for Conway to pursue—resign; and in resigning to Congress he intimated a wish to leave the continent, as a longer stay would endanger his rank and hopes of promotion in France. Washington pointedly said he would throw no obstacles in the way of his retirement, and was naturally more than surprised to find some six weeks later that so far from accepting the resignation, Congress had promoted

Conway to be the Inspector-General of the army, with the rank of major-general, and with powers which made him in many respects independent of the Commander-in-chief. Wilkinson, for bringing the news of Saratoga, was made a Brigadier-General. Both appointments grew out of recommendations from Gates, and it was at Mifflin's earnest desire that Gates had been placed at the head of the Board of War.

The reorganization of the army had now become the most pressing matter, and Washington stated his opinions in a paper that must be regarded as one of the most characteristic of his productions. It was not a bald outline of measures to be framed; but a summary of what his experiences of more than two years' service showed to be necessary. As an explanation of motives it must stand high; and as an indication of personal character it is of great importance. Under the smart of criticism he could strike back at his critics; with shocking proof of neglect and mismanagement before him, he could draw a picture to suit. But it is notable that he never exaggerated, or sought to obtain what he wished by appeals to passion or through stage effects of pose or language.

"A small knowledge of human nature will convince us, that, with far the greatest part of mankind, interest is the governing principle; and that, almost every man is more or less under its influence. Motives of public virtue may for a time, or in particular instances actuate men to the observance of a conduct purely disinterested; but they are not of themselves sufficient to produce a persevering conformity to the refined dictates and obligations of social duty. Few men are capable of making

a continual sacrifice of all views of private interest, or advantage, to the common good." The officers of the army, who were daily giving in their resignations, exemplified this principle. Entering upon what was thought to be a temporary service, and in the first flush of patriotic enthusiasm, they gave little attention to pecuniary or selfish considerations. The prolonged contest, the many hardships and continuous loss and sacrifice had abated their ardor, and given rise to a real disinclination to continue in the service under its existing circumstances. They were impoverished by their commissions, and conceiving that in holding them they were conferring, not receiving, a favor, the demands of duty rested lightly upon them, and apathy and inattention pervaded all ranks. No punishment could act upon them, as the fear of losing a commission was nothing; they rather sought pretexts for disengaging themselves.

Even if they remained in service to the end of the war, they could look forward to no provision. "It must also be a comfortless reflection to any man, that after he may have contributed to securing the rights of his country at the risk of his life and the ruin of his fortune, there would be no provision made to prevent himself and family from sinking into indigence and wretchedness." A half-pay and pensionary establishment would go far to reanimate their languishing zeal. The General pressed this reform as necessary, and thought no consideration of economy should stand in its way. A frugality, however well intended, would wound the army in a very essential manner, and only protract the war.

Having made the position of the officers more endurable, and conferred upon a commission some value,

the regiments must be completed and their establishment altered. Voluntary enlistments had come to an end, and the offer of exorbitant bounties or other inducements had only increased the rapacity and raised the demands of those to be allured. The alternative, however disagreeable, was to fill the regiments by drafts from the militia. Drafting for the war, or for a term of years, would be disgusting and dangerous, perhaps impracticable. It was proposed to draft for a year, with the option of re-enlisting on receiving a bounty. Any deficiencies would be made good by new drafts. This plan would be cheaper than the existing methods of calling in raw recruits, and would introduce an experiment which would gradually be accepted by the people, and prove a source of continual supplies.

Assuming that the States were competent to raise eighty battalions, Washington would have an army of 40,320 rank and file. To divide this force into brigades and divisions, and to appoint the necessary officers, with the institution of such new places as were needed, were to follow, and the quality of officers should be upon a high plane. A serious error had been committed in dealing out rank with too prodigal a hand. "It lessens the value and splendor of it, in some measure degrades it into contempt, breeds jealousies and animosities, and takes away one of the most powerful incitements to emulation." A carefully prepared scheme of rank involved questions of promotion, and a regulation that should add weight and dignity to the fighting part of the army, while securing the best material for all other connected branches was greatly to be desired. Even a special recognition of meritorious action by honorary

rewards, in proportion to the magnitude and brilliancy of the achievement, would kindle the love of glory and distinction which is peculiarly to be cherished and cultivated in a military life. Apart from those special cases there should be no variation from a regular system of promotions—regimental to the rank of captain inclusively, and from that in the line of the State to the rank of brigadier inclusively.

Quite as essential was the question of clothing, on which the health, cleanliness, and appearance of the army so much depended. The wretched experience of the past was, he hoped, not to be repeated under the method of State agents, too recently adopted to permit any judgment on the success. In the Quartermaster-general's department chaos reigned, but, given a good officer at the head, the army could be supplied under a system of contracts. Everything was to be done, and procrastination would only impose the same extreme suffering as was now being encountered. Forage had become exceedingly scarce, and no magazines had been projected. The Commissary department was also in a deplorable condition, and had almost involved the army in ruin. It had pursued a hand-to-mouth plan, scarcely ever having more than two or three days' provisions on hand, and sometimes being much in arrears. Unless ample magazines could be prepared against the next campaign, the operations would end in nought but disgrace and disappointments. Besides feeding and clothing the men, it was important to pay promptly, "and it is perhaps more essential in our army than in any other, because our men are worse supplied, and more necessitous, and the notions of implicit subordination,

not being as yet sufficiently ingrafted among them, they are more apt to reason upon their rights, and readier to manifest their sensibility of any thing that has the appearance of injustice to them; in which light they consider their being kept out of their pay, after it is due.— Nor does the evil end here; the inhabitants, who through choice, accident, or necessity have any pecuniary concerns with the army, finding themselves frequently disappointed in the payments they have a right to expect, grow dissatisfied and clamorous;—the credit of the army, and which is nearly the same thing, the credit of the continent, is impaired—our supplies, of course, are impeded, and the price of every article we want, raised." The machinery of the paymaster's office was above criticism, but there was too often no money to pay from it. Hardly a department of the army did not call for some radical change, all of which must be accomplished before the opening of the campaign, in a few months. It was an unpromising display, for which even the writer felt some apology was due. "The disagreeable picture I have given you, of the wants and sufferings of the army, and the discontents reigning among the officers, is a just representation of evils equally melancholy and important; and unless effectual remedies be applied without loss of time, the most alarming and ruinous consequences are to be apprehended."

This report on the wants of the army had hardly been signed before it received a support that made at least a part of it imperative. Occasional want of meat could be endured; but the commissaries announced a complete failure of provisions. On February 16th little less than a famine prevailed in the camp. "A

part of the army has been a week without any kind of flesh, and the rest three or four days." Great as had been the patience and fidelity of the soldiers, there were symptoms of discontent requiring the most strenuous efforts to allay. Bad as the situation was, the prospects were miserable. Considering that the pay of the troops was three months in arrears, and was doled out in sums too small to satisfy, the distresses of the men were much increased. Cold, wet, hunger, and want of clothes told the story of the miserable winter that has become a by-word for all that was wretched and involving hardship. The men died or deserted in large numbers; the sick roll was always large, and the horses could not be kept, but starved for want of forage. Even near the end of March the new army or levies were not forthcoming, though the conditions of the camp grew brighter.

Out of these events came a rumor that Washington intended to resign his commission. Where the story originated it would be impossible to say; but it expressed the wish of all who were open to the Mifflin influence, still strong in Congress. Dr. Gordon, an eager collector of facts which he afterwards used in a formal history, somewhat modified to suit his ends, asked the General as to its truth. "I can assure you," was the reply, "that no person ever heard me drop an expression that had a tendency to resignation. The same principles, that led me to embark in the opposition to the arbitrary claims of Great Britain, operate with additional force at this day; nor is it my desire to withdraw my services, while they are considered of importance in the present contest; but to report a design of this

kind is among the arts, which those, who are endeavoring to effect a change, are practising to bring it to pass. I have said, and I still do say, that there is not an officer in the service of the United States, that would return to the sweets of domestic life with more heartfelt joy than I should. But I would have this declaration accompanied by these sentiments, that, while the public are satisfied with my endeavors, I mean not to shrink from the cause. But the moment her voice, not that of faction, calls upon me to resign, I shall do it with as much pleasure as ever the weary traveller retired to rest."

Faction and jealousy of Washington had one more weapon in reserve,—an expedition into Canada, the first fruit of the new Board of War. Circumstanced as Washington then was, he saw in it "the child of folly," productive of capital ills. The main object in his plan was to strike a telling blow against Howe's army in Philadelphia; for, that accomplished, the outlying detachments would fall of themselves. The surrender of Burgoyne removed all danger of another movement from Canada, while to subdue that province would be a barren victory for the Americans. When Lafayette was appointed to the command, with Major-General Conway as a second, the real object of the plotters became apparent. Unless they could suspend the ordinary course of the seasons on the lakes the march, as proposed, could not take place; and the generals reached the north only to find that no preparations had been made, and neither an army nor the means of supporting an army had been collected.

Certain changes in the commands of posts were made

necessary. The success of the British in their raid up the Hudson had intensified among the inhabitants of New York an already existing suspicion and dislike of General Putnam. Complaint of his conduct had been made, and it was freely asserted that while he remained in charge of West Point he could expect no assistance from the State. Washington, whose admiration for Putnam had never been large, took the opportunity offered by the inquiry into the loss of Forts Montgomery and Clinton to send him into Connecticut to aid in completing the battalions, and placed Major-General McDougall in his stead. The office of inspector was filled by the appointment of Baron Steuben, a German officer of high rank and fine qualifications. Uniformity of discipline and manœuvring would work a marked change for the better, and Steuben's experience and assiduity in office accomplished much in a short time. In April, Gates was again given command of the northern department, with powers somewhat clipped.

Congress, misunderstanding a recommendation from Washington, authorized him to call out five thousand militia, a form of aid that he did not desire. Many urged him to take this militia and attack Philadelphia, a foolish proposition, showing an ignorance of the relative strength of the two armies. The General entertained a plan of operations, and summoned his officers to council. Should an attempt be made upon Philadelphia, where an army of about five thousand men was strongly posted? Or should the war be transferred to the northward by an enterprise against New York? Or, if neither of these suggestions found favor, should the army remain in a quiet, fortified camp, gaining in discipline and

arrangement, to await the operations of the enemy? The opinions given were not conclusive, and a second council met on May 8th. In the interval it became known that Howe had been relieved of his command, to be succeeded by Sir Henry Clinton; and that commissioners under the North bills were on their way to America. Best of all, a French frigate, the *Sensible*, brought Simeon Deane with copies of the treaty entered into by France with the United States. "No event was ever received with a more heartfelt joy," was Washington's comment. He saw good political consequences, as the States should now shake off their languor and complete their battalions; yet he feared the very promise of aid would tempt them to relapse into a condition of supineness and perfect security. "If we are not free and happy, it will be owing to a want of virtue, prudence and management among ourselves." He took part in the festivities attending the announcement of the treaty, but could not see in the agreement a full solution of the contest with Great Britain.

The council of war convened on the 8th — the most important council of the war. Not only were the major-generals with the main army present, but, by direction of Congress, Gates and Mifflin attended, Knox and Steuben were included, and Lee, recently released from the enemy, signed the conclusions. Although the Continental army could outnumber by a few thousands the British, yet superiority of position turned the scale, and it was unanimously decided that no attack should be made, nor should a formal investment of the city be attempted, as requiring a larger force than could be gathered.

After a long delay, which was mischievous in allowing so many officers to retire from the army, Congress adopted a measure giving half-pay for seven years from a peace to those who should serve to the end of the war. It came too late to accomplish what had been hoped from it, and a more hopeful sign was the evident purpose of many counted as Tories to make terms with their countrymen. The suggestion under which they acted must have come from the British, pointing to the abandonment of the city. To send their heavy equipments by water, and to march the flower of the army by land, was the policy Washington believed to be entertained.

At last all doubt was solved by the British leaving Philadelphia early on the morning of June 18th. Six brigades were sent forward, under the command of Major-General Lee, and Washington soon followed, much impeded by the rain. The enemy moved slowly, and offered a fair mark for an attack, but the Continental officers endorsed the suggestion of Lee, to keep at a comfortable distance from the British, and annoy them by detachment. This decision, wrote Hamilton, "would have done honor to the most honorable society of midwives, and to them only." Accordingly Lafayette was sent on to join the left flank of the enemy, Lee, in a pet, having declined what he regarded as so secondary a duty. Finding that his refusal would prejudice his claims to command, he changed his tone, asked for the assignment, and Lafayette gracefully yielded. As the enemy had increased the strength of their rear column, Lee's force was raised by two brigades, giving him command of about five thousand men. On the morning of

the 28th, fearing that the British would escape without a blow, Washington determined to attack, and had ordered Lee to advance as soon as the English were in motion. Washington himself, when the signal was given, pushed on to support him with the main army, and to his chagrin, after marching five miles, found the advanced corps in full retreat, "as I was told, by General Lee's orders, without having made any opposition, except one fire, given by a party under the command of Colonel Butler, on their being charged by the enemy's cavalry, who were repulsed." Exchanging a few indignant words with Lee, Washington rode forward and rallied the retreating corps, which checked the enemy for a time sufficient to allow proper dispositions to be made. After a severe engagement the British were driven back to their original position, whence they stole silently away during the night, and made further pursuit out of the question. Lee was placed under arrest.

This battle at Monmouth, and Washington's conduct of it, produced a marked change in public opinion. His instant grasp of the situation, and the measures taken to undo Lee's blunder, turning a defeat into a victory, gave his critics pause, and caused his friends to acclaim their praise. "I never saw the General to so much advantage," wrote Hamilton; while Boudinot replied, "in this instance he rose superior to himself." Congress passed, without a dissenting voice, a resolution thanking him for his activity in the pursuit, for his distinguished exertions in forming the line of battle, and for his great good conduct in leading on the attack and gaining the important victory of Monmouth.

Meditating on these events, a short time after,

Washington gave his opinion to a friend. "It is not a little pleasing, nor less wonderful to contemplate, that after two years' manœuvring and undergoing the strangest vicissitudes, that perhaps ever attended any one contest since the creation, both armies are brought back to the very point they set out from, and that which was the offending party in the beginning is now reduced to the use of the spade and pickaxe for defence. The hand of Providence has been so conspicuous in all this, that he must be worse than an infidel that lacks faith, and more than wicked, that has not gratitude enough to acknowledge his obligations. But it will be time enough for me to turn preacher, when my present appointment ceases; and therefore I shall add no more on the doctrine of Providence."

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